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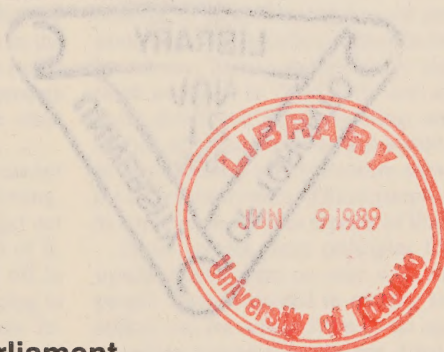
Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday, 24 May, 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

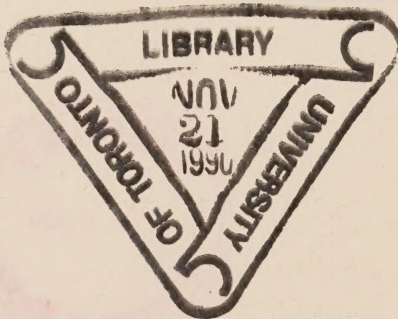
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, May 24, 1989

The committee met at 1540 in room 228.

ORGANIZATION

The Chairman: I would like to convene this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. We do have a fairly busy afternoon, so perhaps we can begin.

Madam Chairman: The other people I would like to have here are the members of the committee. We have two items on our agenda. The first is the discussion of our future business and our future mandate and the second is the approval of the draft second report. We will begin with comments that will be on Hansard and then, when we get to the approval of the draft second report, we will move in camera for that particular section.

I would like to start the discussion on future business.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not know if we need a motion right at the moment or you want to wait for a little bit and then put a motion forward after we have some discussion. Maybe that is the easiest way, just to get the ball rolling.

I think we have a general consensus that we were going to deal with financing matters in the next portion of what we deal with, and we really were not sure what government announcements would be coming forward and therefore what parameters we might want to put on that.

My own view at the moment is that we cannot hold our next set of hearings, in terms of timing, until September. We are very unlikely to get out of the House until mid-July, by the looks of it, and people are going to want some time off in August, I would think, and we are also going to have trouble getting educators and others involved until school reopens, so what we should be looking at is that kind of a time frame.

Having now heard the government's announcements on these matters, my own sense is that there are three major principles which still warrant discussion, and some of it, people will say, has been handled by government action and some people will think it has not been in the last little while.

The three principles, I would think, would be the question of equity, which one could presume would be between the two systems, but I suppose it would also allow people from the private school system to come in and talk to us about

their concerns about the financing of education in that sense.

There is the whole question of accountability for the funds. There is the whole matter now, which is raised by a number of matters, whether it is the provincial-municipal share and the accountability then for what happens in education in, for instance, the absolute case now of Toronto being in a negative grant situation where it is paying the whole shot and yet a huge part of the control of education clearly takes place at the provincial level. Where is the accountability? How do we deal with all that?

There are other issues around not having coterminous boards between the two systems, in terms of some of the raising of taxes and the spending of taxes and how all that plays. I think that question of accountability for financing is an important one.

The third one would be adequacy. The question is always begged by the ceilings that are being exceeded in many parts of the province where boards are reluctantly sticking to the ceilings, feeling that they are not providing the same kinds of educational opportunities as other boards are. That is another major element that I think needs to be dealt with, and the formula, again developed around pooling, and the \$180 million after the six years that would be brought in is something which answers some questions but raises some others. I think people would want to come in on various aspects of that.

Those are the three principles I thought we would maybe want to raise with the public if people were interested in coming before us. It strikes me we would have to do some modest travelling around the province. I have tried and tried to think of how we would get to Europe, but I have not come up with a solution yet.

It strikes me that would be how to operate for several weeks in the fall, and then, because of the size of those three principles that we would be dealing with, we would need a fairly significant amount of time at the end of our hearings to actually discuss the writing of the report. It would be quite different from what we went through these last two times in the writing of the report and leaving it up to research officers to do most of that work for us. It was an easy thing to slough off. This will be much tougher and we

would need more significant time at the end of the hearings to deal with that.

That would be my proposed direction for us to move in.

The Chairman: Thank you. Instead of having a specific motion, why do not we open it up for general discussion and then make a motion at the end? Would that be acceptable? Mr Jackson, would you like to comment?

Mr Jackson: I would concur with everything my colleague from Scarborough has indicated. This committee is very much aware of our concern with respect to financing matters and that they have a certain degree of priority for the committee's review. It is apparent that the time has come for that agenda item and therefore I suspect it would be appropriate for us to proceed on the general framework Richard has just set out.

I support that fully and would expect that also constitutes part of what the discussion was with Mr Reycraft and the other two political parties with respect to the future of this committee. So having said that, it is unfortunate that we are going to sit through most of July, but having said that, the sooner we can get at it in September the better.

Mr Beer: I think the general approach that Richard set out is one that would be useful and those are certainly areas that we do want to look at. I think the points about September are appropriate. Clearly, that is when we would need to begin.

Frankly, if at our session today there is consensus around those issues, and I think there is, then perhaps we would want to ask the subcommittee to take that and just work it into what we could then use in terms of asking the public for its presentations; and we will want to get the dates set so people have got lots of time to prepare.

I think there is a lot now that is on the financing plate in terms of the initiatives that the minister announced and that came forward in the budget, and that there would be some real usefulness in looking not only at those programs but at other points that people would want to bring forward. One of the particularly useful things about our exercise in general has been, in all the sets of hearings, allowing through that process the different stakeholders to come forward, set out their views and give us a chance to explore those with them. That really has not happened in this kind of setting for quite a while.

With all that has happened and with the various changes simply arising out of Bill 30 and

these recent announcements, I think there really is something of value in having a public exchange on these, which is partly educational in the best sense of the word, and which also can be very informative for us in terms of where the various players are with that.

So my sense is that the three principles that Richard has set out would be a good basis on which to build our hearings and, if that is generally agreeable to everyone, that we ask the subcommittee to get together just to try to put that into a more specific framework so we can get our ads out and all that sort of thing.

Mr Black: I want to comment on Richard's comment about accountability, which clearly should be built into anything the committee does. I would think it is particularly important, if you are going to discuss educational financing and the percentage of funding from the ministry and the percentage from local school boards, that you try and build into that discussion the accountability aspect, because otherwise you will have everybody and his brother coming in and saying, "We want 60 per cent."

Few people who will be saying that recognize that in the good old days when we had 60 per cent, we had some of the toughest years in financing education this province has ever seen, because we had government restrictions on what school boards could spend. I think we have to make people discuss that whole question of "share" of educational financing on a rational basis; who is responsible for what and what controls does the government exert over total spending in education. That is going to be a tough one but I think it could be done.

The Chairman: It appears we have some sort of consensus about the general direction. Am I to take it from the comments that we would look at all three of the areas, equity, accountability and adequacy, as opposed to taking one specific part of that?

Mr D. S. Cooke: It sounds good to me.

1550

Mr Beer: Look at the excellent initiatives of the government. I think those do give us the framework. I think, frankly, if the subcommittee could meet and just put it into the appropriate language, we should proceed, and we can go on and deal with the other report.

The Chairman: Yes. I guess the other thing we should establish now, particularly because we will have to go to the public with advertising in the very near future, is the timing of it. The steering committee can decide the exact specifics

of how we are going to phrase the mandate, but I would think the full committee should decide on timing. My understanding, just from discussions we have had before, is that we are going to be asking for September and October.

Mr Beer: Yes.

The Chairman: Does that sound reasonable? In view of the comments we got from the educational community and many parents last year about the difficulty of making presentations in the summer and in view of the points brought up by both Mr Johnston and Mr Jackson about the fact that we will probably be sitting until the end of July, I think it is quite reasonable.

Do we have approval from the committee to have our clerk ask for September and October sittings for our hearings?

Mr Keyes: You have your permission for six weeks, September and October, so you are going for six weeks.

The Chairman: I would think we would have substantial demands for presentations. Last year we decided that we would not start until a week after Labour Day, but it may be advisable to start immediately after Labour Day to get in as many presentations as possible.

Mr Beer: I am mindful of Richard's point that in this round we really do want to ensure that we have some good time collectively, after we have heard the presentations, to discuss our report, because this will be complex. Provided the House leaders agree, I would think we could begin right after Labour Day.

Mr Jackson: I do not know how appropriate that would be with respect to the educational community and its ability to be prepared.

Mr Beer: One thought was that we might want to use that first week, or part of it, for ourselves in getting some briefings.

Mr Jackson: We will do a half-day with Macdonald for openers, right?

Mr Beer: Yes, I think we could quite usefully explore that. I wonder if we could leave it with the subcommittee that the committee would agree that we want to begin as soon as possible in September. I realize there may be some other things that the House leaders have to look at in terms of balancing of the committees, but we would be prepared to begin then.

Mrs O'Neill: Madam Chairman, I am sorry I am late today. As you know, we all have other distractions from time to time.

I know a lot of people on this committee have a very high level of knowledge of school board

financing and school financing, but would it be useful to have somebody come and do the grant structures and that kind of thing with us as they presently exist and as they are about to change? Do we want to spend a half-day with the director of finance from the Ministry of Education and ask as many questions as come to mind?

The Chairman: I think that is crucial.

Mrs O'Neill: Then perhaps we can do what Mr Jackson has suggested, if Dr Macdonald is willing to come. I had the opportunity of being able to be one of the few people who did have time with him after his report, and it was very helpful to see where some of his thinking came from. He did spend close to two years gathering information on school board finance across the province. I do feel it would be very useful for this committee, because anybody who has worked in this area knows it takes a couple of years on the job to really understand the finer points of school finance.

The Chairman: I think those are excellent suggestions.

Mr Jackson: Not to appear mischievous, but since Mr Johnston has raised the issue of the equity, taking in its broadest definition to include all children in Ontario, meaning private schools, there may be an opportunity to examine the elements of the Shapiro report that dealt with the issues of financing in education and equity. Should the deputy minister not be the deputy minister at the time, perhaps we might even entertain inviting him.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have a couple of comments on this, if I might. I think it is problematic if we start hearing educators' deputations too early, given how difficult that first part of September is for everybody in the field. I think the basic education we are all going to require on this, whether it is updating on new programs and what the actual fallout of that is going to be or whether it is just getting an understanding of the various principles we are talking about and getting experts in, can easily take virtually the first week on that kind of testimony and education for ourselves. I am not concerned about that and I think the subcommittee can work that out.

The other thing I would say is I think we should ask for the six weeks Ken was alluding to, realizing the House leaders are going to have enormous difficulties with the organization of committees, since all we will have is September. We usually have two different months in the summer where you can arrange things, and

therefore people who are normally on the standing committee on social development can go to the select committee, etc.

This time they will all be hitting in September, by the looks of it, and that is going to make it very difficult. But I think if we get our request in early on this, as a select committee that can meet only when the House is not sitting, we might have a better chance of getting it. I do think we are going to need close to two weeks to actually write the report and get ourselves together on these very large questions.

The Chairman: I think perhaps the first thing we can do is direct the clerk to prepare a letter tomorrow to go to the House leaders requesting the September-October time slot, and that letter should mention the fact that we are limited to that period for various and sundry reasons, which we can outline, and the difficulty of time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Be specific about why we need the six weeks, because I think otherwise we are likely to be told that four is the maximum. I think the fact that we will be travelling—we will have to travel around the province, it seems to me, in at least a limited way—the fact that we are going to need fairly in-depth briefing, much more complicated than we have for many of our bills and things that we deal with, and the fact that the writing of this is going to be more complicated than it normally is, are why we are asking for it. I think that needs to be spelled out in our request to the House leaders or we may have difficulty with their response.

Mrs O'Neill: I cannot think of the exact word, but there is also an appendix to the Macdonald report on school financing—it was written by Mr Archer—which is very, very detailed. I am sure our research people will want it. There are people here who may find that very useful, because it is, I think, the most detailed examination of Ontario school finance available under two covers. I cannot think of the exact title. It is a grey book. I think it has got either white writing—

Interjection: Black pages.

Mrs O'Neill: —but I have the two things together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Was this a terrible dream you had?

Mrs O'Neill: No.

Mr Beer: The member had a nightmare.

Mrs O'Neill: We actually had this person also come to the Association of Large School Boards in Ontario and talk to us about his finding. It is an important appendix that we should consider at the same time, if we are interested in school finances.

Mr Beer: Is that Bill Archer or William Archer or David?

Mrs O'Neill: I am not sure.

The Chairman: I would suggest, since we might be able to develop a fairly extensive list, that this be left to the steering committee, and members of each caucus can take it to their own particular member and give their suggestions to come forward. Also, the matter of travel should be left to the steering committee and also, more or less, the schedule of how we are going to work it. The clerk and I will commit to get a letter out to the House leaders, hopefully by the end of the day tomorrow.

Mr Beer: Good.

Mrs O'Neill: Has it been determined when we will be advertising?

The Chairman: I think we will advertise as soon as we have had our steering committee meeting and approved our final mandate. I would suggest the steering committee should probably meet early next week, Monday or Tuesday.

Mr Jackson: Right after our debate on heritage languages, when we are all in accord, would be a good time for us to discuss it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Personally speaking, I cannot be around Monday and then heritage language is likely to be up Tuesday. I told the government House leader I cannot be here Monday, so I think it will be next Tuesday. It is not final yet. I do not think the House leaders have actually talked about it, but all I am saying is that our steering committee meeting may have to wait until the middle of next week.

Mr Beer: We can have some informal discussion.

The Chairman: Okay, very good. I think we have reached consensus in keeping with our previous attitude and air of co-operation on the select committee. Now we will move in camera to discuss the approval of the draft second report. If Hansard and any other parties would consider leaving, that would be much appreciated.

The committee continued in camera at 1600.

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Chairman: Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L)

Vice-Chairman: Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West L)

Beer, Charles (York North L)

Cooke, David S. (Windsor-Riverside NDP)

Furlong, Allan W. (Durham Centre L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Miclash, Frank (Kenora L)

O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

Villeneuve, Noble (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry PC)

Substitutions:

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Black, Kenneth H. (Muskoka-Georgian Bay L) for Mr Mahoney

Clerk: Brown, Harold

Assistant Clerk: Manikel, Tannis

Staff:

Gardner, Dr. Robert J. L., Assistant Chief, Legislative Research Service

Porter, Ann, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service



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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 11 September 1989

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Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 11 September 1989

The committee met at 1018 in room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING

The Chairman: Good morning. I apologize to our guests this morning that we are starting late. There has been a bit of a mixup with some of the members about the starting time. We will commence. I think you will find the rest of the members filtering in as the morning goes on.

I would first like to apprise members and guests of our mandate for this session of the select committee on education. We will be looking at the future of education financing relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances. We have four weeks of hearing time. During that time we will be doing some travelling around the province. Next Monday, 18 September, we will be going to Kingston. The following day we will be in Ottawa. On 20 September, we will be in Sudbury. We will then be coming back to Queen's Park for the following day. On Monday, 25 September, we will be in Windsor.

We have today's agenda before us. Just before we go to the presenters from the Ministry of Education, I would like to introduce you to our two researchers. There is Dr Bob Gardner who has been with the committee for some time and has been at least partially responsible for the excellent reports. We will miss Ann Porter from our committee, but I think she will be very ably represented instead by David Pond who is the new researcher with legislative research. Welcome to both of you. Bob and David, perhaps you would like to just briefly go over the background information you have already passed out to members.

Dr Gardner: The members will have three things that we did just to set the context for these hearings. One is a survey of education finance in the other provinces. That is just to look at overall patterns and trends. You might want to look at that in relation to this book that members had about a month or so ago. You will not want to read this cover to cover necessarily—Cam did, of course—but it is very good reference document on all kinds of details.

The other two things are on Ontario, both prepared by David, an executive summary of the Macdonald commission's main recommenda-

tions and patterns, and finally, some historical background on education finance in Ontario. That is just to set the context for the contemporary information the ministry will be giving us. We will of course be doing regular summaries of the hearings on a week-by-week basis as we go along.

Mrs O'Neill: In conjunction with the Macdonald report, I know there is available from the ministry a list of the recommendations that have been enacted, or at least have begun to be acted upon. I wonder if we can get that. I think it would be very helpful for us to see how much of the commission report has been implemented. I think several members, and certainly members of the general public, would be quite surprised.

The Chairman: I agree that would be very helpful. I do not know, Mr Trbovich, if you feel it would be an integral part of your presentation today to talk about the Macdonald commission and what parts have been implemented, or if you would instead prefer to get that material for us in writing.

Mr Trbovich: I think it would be appropriate to put it in writing. There are some 70 or so recommendations. We could respond, showing where we have responded and what is under review; that sort of thing. My intention was to focus on the funding system currently, as it presently operates, for the presentation today.

The Chairman: Thank you. Speaking of obtaining documents from the ministry, we have not one but two people from the ministry who will be working with our committee. Dr Linda Perry, I believe, is from the education liaison and exchange branch. On anything relating to the educational aspects and programming, that type of thing, Dr Perry will be assisting us. Dr Perry is in the first row there in the blue. Mr Leon Brumer was here. There he is hiding behind the slide machine. Mr Brumer will be working on anything relating to the financial aspects. If we request documents, I am sure he will be pleased to get them for us. Mr Brumer will also be travelling with our committee when we hit the road next week.

Now, all that being said, I think we will go to our presenters from the ministry this morning.

Mr Trbovich, perhaps you would like to introduce your panel for us.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Mr Trbovich: Good morning. On my right is Wayne Burtnyk who is responsible for a group in the ministry on grants policy as it pertains to the general legislative grant. He has been with the ministry for several years. I guess he is the resident expert on matters GLG.

Also here is Theo Grootenboer. He is responsible for the capital program in the ministry and, as well, has been on that front for several years. I guess he is our resident expert on capital.

On my left is Brian Lenglet who does a lot of our policy work as well. Brian is intimately involved in the whole question of equalization of the assessment base for the purpose of apportionment and the distribution of the grants, so he has a good background in property tax and so on.

On his left is Walter Wasylo who has come to us recently from Treasury. His main area of interest is the whole question of the expenditures of school boards and their behaviour with respect to those expenditures and financing.

Mrs O'Neill: That must be an interesting job.

Mr Trbovich: Very. That kind of sectoral analysis is something new that we are embarking upon. We think it important to understand why boards spend the way they spend. That helps us to focus on the grant mechanisms to ensure the moneys are going to programs and specific needs.

To begin with, I would like to preface all our comments about the current funding model by saying that the government has studied the issue of education finance in detail. We have focused on a number of areas including capital and the operating grants and also the question of accountability, ensuring that these grants are being expended in the areas for which they were designed and intended.

The culmination of that study has resulted in the recent announcement of the new GLG funding formula, a copy of which we have provided to the committee members. The purpose of that review was, first of all, to ensure that the operating grants were understandable, that they were as simple and straightforward as possible, and that they attempted to achieve as high a degree of fairness or equity as possible in terms of the distribution of those grants across Ontario, with the ultimate purpose that each and every child in Ontario would have an equal educational opportunity to a solid core education program.

There are a series of changes that we have implemented and are planning to implement. Some of the changes are indeed larger than others, the most recent one being the matter of the government's intention to make fair the local tax base between the coterminous boards in terms of sharing in the publicly traded corporate assessment and improving the rules around the method by which business partnerships are allowed to direct their school support. There have been many others and we will go into those in specifics as we go through the presentation.

One of the key elements in this grant distribution system is that it is predicated or based on the local share or contribution from the property tax base, and the distribution of grants takes that into account. The property tax base is critical in this equation in terms of fairness and equity being achieved. What I mean by that is that as long as we can effectively measure the relative wealth of each school board in Ontario, then we can distribute provincial sums to those boards on an equitable, fair basis.

That exercise is a fairly complicated one because in the 838 municipalities across Ontario there are varying assessment systems. These assessment systems date back to a market value basis of 1940. Some of them have been recently updated, I suppose as currently as 1988 market value. The exercise here for us is to attempt to equalize these bases or bring them to a common level across Ontario. We do this through the means of the equalization process. In fact, it brings these bases to a current market level value for each jurisdiction across Ontario. By doing so, we now know the actual value of the tax base of every school board across Ontario.

In getting to that result—an equitable, fair equalization—we have had to take a number of steps. For the first time two years ago, the government undertook to implement current equalization factors in the process of equalizing assessments. In 1988, we began that phase-in. We were previously using factors based on 1969 market values and we have updated that now to current factors, but with a phase-in mechanism over five years. In 1988, we took the first step. We went one fifth of the way.

In that process, we limited the shifts that would occur to three per cent on the distribution of grants to school boards. So if you were a school board whose relative wealth was incorrectly determined under the old factors and in point of fact the wealth was a bit higher, you would in effect experience less grant as a result through the introduction of these factors. We

limited that kind of shift or loss in grant, if you will, to three per cent.

As well, equalization factors are used with assessment for the apportionment of the education cost within a school board area among the constituent municipalities. Each of the municipalities, based on their relative wealth to the whole of the school board, picks up a share of the requisition of the board. That share, that apportionment is a function of the relative wealth of each municipality, and again, the use of equalization factors.

1030

By moving to current equalization factors, there would also be shifts among municipalities. In that regard, we have gone one fifth of the way, but we have held the shifts to about five per cent. It could not be more than five per cent for one to be phased in. That began in 1988. In 1989, we went the second step. Basically we went one quarter of the remaining way on the phase-in of those factors. It is the ministry's intention to submit before cabinet another plan to continue the phase-in of these factors until we are fully phased in and with considerable assurance can say that we are effectively equalizing the tax base and therefore measuring the relative wealth of school boards.

I wonder if we can turn to the first slide. There are four or five principles governing education finance, as the current model exists. The first, of course, relates to the overall objective; that is, to ensure that there is an equal educational opportunity for every child in Ontario to a solid core education program. That is the ultimate goal. How do we do that?

1. We ensure that there would be some sense or measure of what it would cost for a core education program. You may have heard some of the terminology referring to this level of expenditure that we deem to be sufficient and appropriate as an approved level of expenditure or a ceiling. So the establishment of these ceilings, which are really the costs we believe are appropriate and adequate to educate a child in Ontario, is critical in all of this exercise.

2. We then want to ensure that there would be an equal local tax effort for ratepayers across Ontario in terms of contributing towards that cost, that ceiling. That of course involves that equalization process I referred to earlier, the equalization of assessment so that we can determine the relative wealth of each school board. The assessment-poor boards would presumably get more grant per pupil and the

assessment-richer boards would presumably get less grant per pupil.

3. The funding model has to respect, and I believe it does, the local autonomy of each school board to establish those priorities and policies and to implement the education program in the community. Local autonomy includes the right to raise those taxes from their ratepayers to provide that quality educational experience.

4. The boards have local responsibility for program delivery and a determination of the mode of delivery. I think that is also important in terms of reinforcing local autonomy.

The last two points, point 3 and point 4, bear on the question of accountability. The elected trustees are accountable to their ratepayers for those expenditures and for the delivery of their education programs in the community.

If the committee wishes to interrupt this presentation with questions or for more information, I would be more than happy to handle those as we go along. It gives me a chance to take a breather, to be frank.

The Chairman: It probably would be easier to divert from our usual procedure and entertain questions as we go along since I assume that it will be a fairly lengthy presentation and there will be some complexity as well.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am not sure I understand this notion of accountability you put forward. Theoretically, one would presume that what you have said would be the case, but if you take a situation like a board that has virtually no money-raising capacity at all, an isolated northern board that receives most of its money from you, I am not sure what kind of real accountability there is for that board if a tiny percentage of what money is actually going into programming is its money.

Vice versa, the opposite of that, is, where is the accountability in Metropolitan Toronto where they are in a negative grant situation? They are accountable to you for all your policies around curriculum etc and they pay the shot, yet it is you who in theory is supposed to be accountable for the mass of the programs.

I do not understand the notions of accountability here. Put yourself in the position of an elector. How the heck does that elector know who to go after in terms of the quality of education questions he might have?

Mr Trbovich: In response, with respect to an isolated board or a section 70 board, for the benefit of the committee members, these are boards that are very small, and in this case isolated, in remote communities in Ontario with

virtually a negligible tax base, although there is some levying of taxes. It is essentially residential ratepayers, if you will. They are very small boards and almost 99 per cent of their funding is undertaken by the province to achieve that goal, to put them on an equal footing with every other board in Ontario.

There is a lot of support and supervision by our regional office network to ensure that these isolated boards have the support and the expertise necessary to deliver a good educational program. In these cases the question of accountability is—there is still a need there to interpret community need and to be sensitive to the education of those children. It is that board and those trustees' responsibility to set a mill rate, albeit a very small requisition, to interpret those community needs and to communicate them effectively to the ministry. So they move off and on the board as the case may be, but I think that is an extreme example, of those small boards.

Moving to the larger question, a great majority of boards in Ontario have a balance of provincial contributions in the form of grants and local revenues raised through the property tax. Some of these revenues are in respect of expenditures that are over those approved ceilings. In 1975-76, the Education Act was amended to allow boards, elected trustees, to set local requisitions and mill rates, as the case may be, to raise funds for expenditures over and above that which is approved by the Ministry of Education. They are indeed accountable for those kinds of actions at the time of their election. They have elections every three years, much the same way as municipal politicians.

In the case of Metro and the issue of a negative grant, I do not believe, in our opinion, that they are in a negative grant today. In point of fact, our estimation is that something like about \$4.5 million in grant is going to Metro. That is not surprising because Metro Toronto happens to be the wealthiest board in all of Ontario. Its ability to spend money over those approved ceilings is considerably greater than that of the great majority of boards in all of Ontario.

On the accountability question, there is the financial aspect of it and then there is the program delivery aspect. The ministry wants to ensure that its guidelines, its curriculum and its initiatives are being undertaken, and for that purpose it works with the board and its administration to ensure those are appropriately employed. In terms of financial accountability, the ratepayers have every right to assess the viability of that board at election time just like they do with

municipal politicians, and I guess provincial politicians.

1040

Mr R. F. Johnston: The problem they have is not knowing where to go. Look at this from a parent's view. There is a lot of talk about the dropout rate. If you buy the statistics on the dropout rate being high or too high, however you want to look at it, and you are a parent in the system and you are living in Metropolitan Toronto, who do you go after? Certain things are funded through the Metro-wide board since we had Bill 127 passed years ago and certain things through the local board, but the province has the control over much of the curriculum and other kinds of factors that have the major impact on who is going to make it or not make it in the education system.

You are not paying for much. As I understand it, that \$4.5 million is mostly for special kinds of programs. It is not for the basic educational costs in Metropolitan Toronto at all. If it were not for certain kinds of inner-city programs, special education concerns, new immigrant concerns and that sort of thing, you would not be able to tout even the \$4.5 million they are talking about. Whatever percentage that is of their overall budget, I do not know; it must be absolutely minuscule.

The point I am trying to make about financial accountability is, who pays the tax and is accountable for the outcomes of whatever it is, in this case educational quality? Those things are tied together. I do not understand, with the way the system has evolved now, how a person in the Metropolitan Toronto area can come after the province of Ontario. What is he going to come after them for, the \$4 million you are passing through and its effect on the system, your controls on the curriculum, etc, lack of money for inner-city programs? How do they come after you when in fact they are paying everything through their property tax?

Mr Trbovich: First of all, Metro public in our view is getting about \$4.5 million in grants, but Metro separate is getting considerably more, so in total it would be—what?—roughly about \$100 million—

Mr Burtnyk: About \$200 million probably.

Mr Trbovich: About \$200 million of provincial money is going into Metro with respect to education. We have two publicly funded systems in Metropolitan Toronto, and to put it into perspective, about \$200 million, roughly, is

going into Metro, so to suggest that it is only \$4.5 million—

Mr R. F. Johnston: We can deal with it. We will deal with the question of what is happening with the Catholic system and the funding of that as we go on, and that whole equity question, but the reality is that for the public taxpayer and for the public system in Metropolitan Toronto, you pay virtually nothing out of the enormous budgets there are. I do not know. What is the budget for all the public boards for Metro Toronto?

Mr Trbovich: It is incredibly large. It is about \$1.5 billion.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it \$1.5 billion, or almost \$2.5 billion?

Mr Burtnyk: It is perhaps \$1.2 billion.

Mr Trbovich: Okay. I guess I cannot really answer part of your question, about where they turn to, other than to suggest that there is a very substantial administrative support structure in each of the systems in Metro Toronto, the two publicly funded systems.

We have superintendents of education and principals of schools and so on and so forth. I think of the teachers themselves. The real contact, the first contact to get answers to questions is at the local community school level, and then there is the protocol that parents follow in terms of moving up to the superintendent level and so on. Yes, it is true there is a Metro system in place and it works very well. In fact, without it the Toronto school board would be getting no money from the province and we would be contributing funds to Scarborough, East York, York and the other school boards in Metro. But they have a share in the arrangement. They share the wealth in the city of Toronto with the assessment-poor parts of Metro. That seems to work very, very well. I think parents can get answers to those kinds of questions directly because the system is in place, and at least in my view it works.

In terms of questioning the curriculum and the new thrust as expressed in the throne speech about restructuring education, in terms of the 1989 throne speech initiative, those questions, I presume, are properly addressed to the minister and through each member of the Legislature. Beyond that, I cannot answer your question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will come back to it later on, because it is a great example you have just raised. A parent now in an area that is overcrowded and is not expecting to have—for instance, the Peel region which expects to see its

number of portables drop to 21,000 from 23,000 by the time of the end of your funding in 1992 for capital—we will leave that aside—can read that throne speech with wonderful pleasure, I suppose. Now an expectation has been raised by the provincial government that you will have full-day kindergarten available to you in Ontario and here is a board that has no space for anything, right? It has also been told in that throne speech that the province will not pay for capital for changing that system to accommodate senior kindergarten. I think it points up wonderfully the problem of accountability.

Where does somebody turn? They are going to turn to their local board member, poor sucker, and say: "Why is it we don't have this when another area that doesn't have the same space problems is able to accommodate it? This is unfair to us." Yet you are the ones who are hamstringing it through the way the government is operating this. I just think the accountability in terms of actual outcomes now is a very difficult thing for parents to be able to get a handle on.

The Chairman: Mr Johnston, with the indulgence of the committee, I see that we may go quite far astray. We will certainly be on topic—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Astray? I thought we were dealing with points 3 and 4.

The Chairman: —but I think it may be better to save our questions for clarification only; if there are fuzzy areas where we do not comprehend—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know philosophical questions can be difficult, Madam Chairman, but I think the fundamental premise upon which the accountability notions are based needs to be examined, and I am not sure that I understand any more what we are talking about when we talk about accountability.

There is no direct link between program and the level of government, a democratically elected individual, that a parent can go to. The range across the province in terms of the real responsibility for the financial portions of what is going on is very, very different and it is very hard for a parent to be able to ascertain where he should go after the provincial government as the problem and where he should go after his local board member. I think that is a fundamental, underlying philosophical premise that I wanted to get a handle on, and I still do not understand it.

The Chairman: I certainly did not mean to imply that your questions were not relevant; they are right on topic. What I am concerned about is the ministry—

Mrs O'Neill: What about going after both simultaneously. Would that satisfy you?

Mr R. F. Johnston: How do you? How do you know which?

Mrs O'Neill: I think a lot of that goes on. I do not know about your desk.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again, the last strike we had in Metro, which Cam and I were just mumbling together about, was a perfect example of parents trying to go to a local board member to say: "What's going on in the strike? How can I get my kid back into the system?" and the local trustee saying: "Oh, I'm not on the Metro board. I don't know what's going on," and the province saying, "That's a local matter and they will determine it." The avenues of communication are very obscure now as the system gets more and more complicated.

Mr Furlong: Who is on the Metro board? Why do you not go to him?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Good question. How do you find out when they are indirectly appointed?

The Chairman: We have several other members who indicated they have questions, Mr Mahoney and Mr Jackson. I think the committee should make a decision at this stage whether you want to have in-depth questions, which may get quite involved because I can see that ones like Mr Johnston's could take a whole morning to go into, or whether we want to go on with the ministry's presentation, and as I say, limit our questions at this stage just to clarification.

Mr Jackson: Steve, do you have a deep question?

Mr Mahoney: I could probably put a number of deep questions, at least from your perspective, I am sure, you Conservative people.

The Chairman: Shall we entertain only shallow questions at this time?

Mr Mahoney: I would like to suggest that we not get into a debate at this stage, that we allow the presentation to carry on and that we try to limit it to clarification and technical questions as much as possible. I could debate at some length the concern about items 3 and 4 and where the people who set the priorities etc should be the ones who are accountable. I understand some of the concerns about financing.

While I think Mr Johnston's questions are questions that this committee is going to deal with before the end of this mandate we are working on, I would like to hear the balance of the presentation of the ministry staff, the

professional staff, and then determine how we get into those philosophical debates.

The Chairman: When I gave the original instructions or recommendations—I would phrase it that way—to the ministry when they asked for advice as to how to structure their presentation, I had suggested that in the morning they would do their presentation, and following the formal presentation we would open it up for questions at that time, which is normally the way we have—

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is pretty desirable for what is going on here this morning, frankly. I thought that was what we were going to do. Then you opened it up. The discussion we have had is all about the philosophy, the underpinnings of how this thing operates. I asked some questions about the philosophy and now you are telling me we should go and hear the rest of the presentation and come back to it. I am open to that; that is fine.

Mr Mahoney: Your questions are so provocative that they would lead the rest of the members of the committee to get into the debate and we might as well send the staff back to their offices.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Debate? Right. Do you know the answer to that question, about how the ministry presumes to operate?

Mr Mahoney: I have definite opinions on it and I would be delighted to share them with you, but I would rather hear the professionals instead of the politicians.

1050

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am after what the presumptions of philosophy are. I want to know your opinions about this in the future and what the political perspectives of it are, but I want to try to understand what the present presumptions are around the notion of accountability; that is all.

Mr Mahoney: Just read them.

The Chairman: I can tell we are in for a feisty session.

Mr Mahoney: That is right. The gloves are off.

The Chairman: I think, Mr Jackson, you had a question that was related more to clarification.

Mr Mahoney: No more Mr Nice Guy.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I never accused you of that, Steve.

Mr Jackson: My question has to do with point 2, equality of financial burden. Mr Johnston raised the issue of assessment and I want to get a sense from the ministry in terms of its concerns with respect to the fact that in some parts of Metro, taxpayers are paying a greater or dispro-

portionate burden because there they are on market value assessment and therefore are paying a higher tax base than other sections of Toronto. In fact, there have been meetings between your ministry and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, I believe, which would be dealing with assessment matters as well as the Ministry of Revenue.

I just wonder where we are at with that when you can make a statement like point 2, when in fact there is going to be a major inequity as to where you live in Toronto with respect to how much educational tax you are going to pay. I know the government has hinted that it might impose market value adjustments to the new system from the old. I would like to hear what your thoughts are on that. Are you abandoning it?

Mr Mahoney: Here is the guy we should get in here.

Mr Jackson: Listen, you owe him a lot. If it weren't for him, you wouldn't be here.

Interjection: Here we go.

Hon Mr Davis: Do you really want to find out what is wrong with education? The answer to that is nothing. Excuse me for interrupting.

Mr Jackson: We sure need you now, Bill.

Hon Mr Davis: Do you want some help?

Mr Jackson: Yes, we need it.

Mr Keyes: They are looking for a leader, Bill.

Hon Mr Davis: Johnston is, yes.

Mr Jackson: Thanks a lot, Bill.

The Chairman: Just for the record for Hansard, we will state that Mr Davis, the former Premier of the province, says there is nothing wrong with education.

Mr Keyes: The former Minister of Education.

Mr Mahoney: Yes, the former Minister of Education.

The Chairman: The former Minister of Education.

Mr Mahoney: Back when we went to school. Interjections.

The Chairman: Would you like to continue?

Mr Trbovich: I think I remember the question. First of all, the Ministry of Education is not involved in the issue of reassessment in Metro Toronto, but beyond that, the great majority of municipalities in Ontario have implemented on a voluntary basis a program offered by the Ministry of Revenue, namely, that is section 63 or local reassessment. Many of them are moving on a regular updating process, which is important, which is essential to—

Mr Jackson: Mr Trbovich, I just want to know the two points, whether you are still involved in discussions and what the attitude of the government is, given the fact that there is this clear inequity. Half of a person's municipal property taxes are going to educational purposes. I am building on Mr Johnston's question about accountability.

There is inequity on top of that lack of accountability by virtue of the fact that people in newer homes within certain boroughs of Toronto are paying a disproportionately higher amount of property taxes; many citizens, I might add, without children in school. There are others in the city of Toronto who are paying disproportionately low. This committee is trying to get a handle on removing elements of inequity on four or five different fronts. I just wonder why this one seems to be one that we are avoiding, but I do not need the history. I have gone through several section 63s, so I am familiar with that and I am sure most of the committee is.

Mr Trbovich: But as I was saying, I think this is important. Your question is on two levels. First of all, we talked earlier about equalizing the assessment so that we can get a measure of the relative wealth of each school board for the purposes of distributing grant. That is critically important and that is the reason \$4.5 million goes to Metro public, and that is the reason certain boards in Ontario get almost 90 per cent of their funding in the form of provincial grants. It is that equalization effort. If we were to put more money into Metro and not the rest of Ontario, we would destroy the principle of equity, as we refer to in point 2.

If you are in a school jurisdiction that happens to have a lot of wealth in its tax base, in my view it is not a point of argument to complain that you are getting less provincial grant relative to everyone else. The point is that it is done on an equitable basis. That is the first level or issue and we can do that effectively through equalization.

The second point you raise is on individual burdens. That is an issue that is beyond the Ministry of Education's mandate. That is an issue that lies with local municipalities, to get their tax base in order, and as I am aware of it, that had always been the case in Ontario when the province took over that function in 1970.

I think that would answer your question.

Mr Jackson: No, it is not addressing my question, but I will leave it at that point. I just was hopeful you would understand that a trustee, recognizing that in some boroughs of Toronto his ratepayers are paying a disproportionately high

amount for education and are not getting the kind of return on an individual ratepayer basis that other ratepayers are—although that is an assessment question, I am surprised the ministry is silent on it when we are dealing with matters of inequity on several fronts; that is all. You have given me the piece of information I was looking for, that you are not currently involved in that issue; you were at one time and I just wanted to keep on top of it.

Mr Trbovich: We are not involved in the question of whether a municipality opts into a reassessment program.

Mr Jackson: I did not ask that. I talked about Metro Toronto specifically.

Mr Trbovich: It is not even the decision of a school board and its trustees. It is strictly a municipal issue.

Mr Jackson: Of course it is.

The Chairman: Just as a follow-up to Mr Jackson's question, is it not true that it is not only the residential assessment we are talking about, that we are also talking about commercial-industrial? For instance, you were saying that the city of Toronto would underpay as far as Metro-wide education is concerned, but in fact the reverse is true. Does the city of Toronto not pay \$149 million more for education than it receives back in actual services because of the strong commercial-industrial base, so it does equalize?

Mr Trbovich: I am not sure of the exact numbers, but they are in that range and there is an equalization or apportionment process in the Metro federation within that public system, the Metro Toronto public board, and it works effectively.

The question of individual burdens being unfair from one property to the other is clearly a question before the municipalities, whose responsibility the assessment base is. School boards simply requisition funds through municipalities upon that base. Currently, the legislation provides that it is a municipal responsibility and that is why school trustees and school boards and the Ministry of Education are not involved in that issue.

Mr Jackson: It does raise an interesting legal question. If a commercial ratepayer who is paying a higher rate because of the failure of that region to go to market value assessment is now being asked to increase or share a greater amount of his tax revenues for the separate and the public system because of legislation that is pending, it might make an interesting legal case that the

difference between a ratepayer on the other side of the region and himself might render the pooling illegal or improper or inappropriate, given that this base inequity still exists.

That might be an interesting court case that may be considered, but it strikes me that if you look at some of the numbers, we are looking at substantive dollars, and I wonder when some of the downtown Toronto commercial activities that are getting the breaks are contrasted with those out near the airport near Mr Mahoney's area that are paying a disproportionately high amount of commercial assessment. That is why I raise it. I happen to believe they are connected, but I would be satisfied to proceed.

1100

Mr R. F. Johnston: The second principle governing the funding that I want to come to is the presumption of ability to pay that you make, the respective wealth of our municipalities that you talk about. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about what the underpinnings of that presumption are about. British Columbia has 80 per cent of the shared education operating costs coming out of the provincial coffers. Ontario is now about 45 per cent. In general, New Brunswick pays 100 per cent out of the provincial coffers, rather than through the local systems.

What are the underlying presumptions of what wealth means and why the property tax and commercial tax, the local tax base, should be the way of dealing with that rather than a province-wide system of one sort or another? I do not know the assumptions. I would be very interested to know.

Mr Trbovich: I think they are rooted in history, obviously. The funding mechanism has been predicated on a local share being raised from the property tax. Our notions of equality of financial burden are that it is realistic to measure relative wealth of a school board, and that is predicated on all its ratepayers: commercial, industrial, multi-residential, singles, families, farms and so on.

The measurement of that tax base in a relative sense allows us to say that given that there has to be a local share, we are going to ensure that the burden across Ontario from school board to school board is equitable. In other words, the larger the tax base, the more you will raise and the smaller the tax base, the less you will raise, and the grants will vary accordingly. That is the principle and the underlying background of it.

One thing Ontario is fortunate to have is a very strong growth in its local communities in the

form of its tax bases. In terms of British Columbia, which you have raised and I think we will get to those numbers later, that growth tends to be concentrated and very unevenly spread throughout the balance of the province. For other tax policy reasons, reliance upon the property tax for this purpose is deemed inappropriate from their point of view.

We have a very solid, well-established property tax system that has all of the appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure fairness. It has appeal processes, is annually reviewed and is sustainable and defensible, particularly when it is updated on a regular basis.

In terms of equality of financial burden, there is a second part of that equation and that is the ceilings to ensure that what we consider to be an approved level of expenditure is adequate and appropriate in all circumstances across Ontario. That is important and I raise that as the other ingredient, that our funding recognizes or grants up to those approved levels of expenditure and that equality of financial burden is predicated on that level.

I would submit that there is great discrepancy in over-ceiling expenditures, and as your research has pointed out quite correctly, that has a tendency to tend to erode the equity question. We will get to the adequacy of the ceilings later, and I would like to talk about the current ceilings and our view of them.

Just to sum up, that second principle is that as long as we have a grant system that is predicated on a local property tax contributing towards education and allowing a school to have a tax base and therefore some freedom and autonomy, as long as that sense of partnership continues in terms of financing education—roughly \$5 billion is raised annually from that base and \$5 billion roughly is contributed by the province towards education—that is the current philosophical underpinning of the system.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What I think I am hearing is that essentially it is a political decision, rather than something for which we can find some measurements we can follow. We have had presumptions of moving to 60 per cent from the province put forward by a number of commissions in the past. We have had a gradual slippage down to 45 per cent being assumed by the province of late, compared with other provinces. I would be happy to get into those kinds of discussions about why Quebec has 92 per cent paid for by the province in comparison with us.

I guess what I am hearing is that this is a political decision made on the basis of the history

of how property taxes have operated and what the province, I presume, deems will be a politically acceptable share to put between property taxpayers and the provincial revenue, whatever it may be at the given time. That is essentially what it comes down to.

Mr Trbovich: If it comes down to that allocation process, then we will show you some information later in the presentation about how education fits in in those terms, that kind of support and how it is varied and the factors that have come to bear on that.

The Chairman: We have one more questioner on the list and then we will go back to the presentation.

Mrs O'Neill: I think mine are more comments. I am very happy with what Mr Trbovich just said as he closed off, because I am afraid I get very impatient with the 60-40 argument. There is absolutely never any accounting now of what we are putting into superannuation or the 400 per cent or more increase we have put into capital. I am very glad he is going to talk about the factors.

Mr R. F. Johnston: He did not raise those things. They are like red herrings.

Mrs O'Neill: That has to be taken into account when we are talking about support for education in this province.

Second, I really hope, from the beginning, that this committee is not going to get tied and bound and wound to the reassessment story, because it really is not a purview of education, and Mr Trbovich has said this. The Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs deal with this. The assessment system of this province is being done and worked on a voluntary basis by over 800 municipalities.

Some of them have more courage—should I say more foresight?—whatever word you want to use, in trying to tidy up that system, which is a mess. If you talk about 49 years, and some of them that are more progressive may be five or six years behind the real assessment value of what they are dealing with, then those are the purviews of that group of politicians. It has really nothing to do with either school trustees or provincial politicians.

The Macdonald commission does suggest that the province mandate this, and as Mr Trbovich has said and as I repeat, we have not decided to do that. I am not sure I would ever want that to happen, but the reassessment caveat can take us way beyond and certainly be terribly irrelevant to our discussion.

The Chairman: Thank you. Mr Trbovich, would you like to go on with your presentation.

Mr Trbovich: Before I move to the next slide, I did not fully answer your question earlier, Mr Johnston, about the 80 per cent funding level of British Columbia. I did allude to it. It is interesting. This whole question of rate of support is a function of a number of things, but essentially how you fund education, as opposed to political questions, if you will. The same is true when you look in Quebec.

If we look at 80 per cent of the funding coming from the province, what we have to do is look behind that number and ask where that money is coming from. A third of it comes from provincial pooling of commercial-industrial property taxes. If you take the commercial-industrial local property taxes out of the equation, then BC comes down to about 45 per cent provincial support, of provincial revenues. A property tax is a property tax.

You can look at different systems and you can focus on rate of support, but I think it is important, when we look at these, to get behind the numbers. Somebody suggested, "Let's get off property tax." In the case of BC, one third of those revenues are predicated on property taxes, locally raised and submitted to the province. I just add that.

Mrs O'Neill: I did not say get off property taxes; get off the principle of reassessment. I mean, we cannot get off property taxes. I will not go that far.

Interjection: I think you would like to get off them.

The Chairman: She is not the only one.

1110

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree that we have to look behind these things and look at the way they are being raised. We essentially have three sources of funding here. We have commercial and industrial. Then we have the average home owner and apartment dweller, but primarily home owners in terms of the direct hit on them for bucks. In my area, 55 per cent of their property tax is going directly into education these days. No matter what their income is, they are paying that much off their home, just because they happen to live some place, to pay for education. It seems to me we are facing a very imminent tax revolt in this country at the moment. We really have to be very clear about why it is and which tax is going for which kind of cost.

I would love to get a behind the scenes look at all the other provinces in terms of what is actually

hitting that person, regardless of his income, in terms of property taxes across the country in comparison to Ontario. That would be very interesting to see. I think our presumptions of what a person should be paying now for the ongoing operating costs of a school system—not the capital development of a school system, what the base should be in terms of just the fact that you happen to live in a house—is something we really need to re-examine.

I was just trying to understand whether there was some kind of economic assumption about what could be carried here that was nonpolitical-ly oriented. Is it all based on the history and then the political decisions as we make them about what will fly and what will not fly as we move along? I think we are at the stage where we are going to have to really look at that private home owner property tax thing very carefully.

Mr Trbovich: Again, in some cases, there is room for the local trustees to make those kinds of calls about the kinds of burdens on households in their communities, because indeed part of their expenditures are over the ceiling. These are decisions within their purview, so they are best placed to assess the impacts on their local residents and ratepayers, I would presume.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It does raise the accountability question.

The Chairman: Could we go back to your presentation, wherever you were, way back when.

Mr Trbovich: I might as well just jump ahead for the next one. This is, quickly, how the first category of funding, basically the equity model, works. This is outlined for you in that handout we provided earlier. It simply works as the number of pupils times that ceiling amount, a recognized amount per pupil, which gives you what we consider to be the recognized amount for grant, less what we compute to be the local burden or contribution. That is a function of the local equalized assessment times one provincial mill rate, a standard mill rate across the province. That determines how much you would raise from that equalized base. The difference is the provincial grant.

Go over to an example that follows. You have three boards here that were using \$3,500 as the ceiling amount. We are trying to show three variables here to see how the system works and how it achieves equity with respect to the approved levels of expenditure. One is, first of all, that the number of pupils varies. The second component is that the assessment is going to vary.

We will see how the grant mechanism is sensitive to those variables. In the first case, we are going to determine the recognized amount. In the case of board A, with 1,000 pupils, it is \$3.5 million and so on; \$7 million for board B, with 2,000; and board C has an equal amount, 2,000 pupils, \$7 million required. Their equalized assessment, however, is different. Board A and board B have the same equalized assessment, remembering that board A has fewer pupils and board C has a considerably wealthier tax base.

The mill rate is the provincial mill rate that is standard across Ontario. If we raise it, we are expecting local boards to raise more local share with respect to that approved level. The local yield is a function of that tax base. In the case of board A, it has to raise \$900,000. Board B has to raise an equal amount. Board C has a considerably greater tax base and therefore it is expected to raise more, \$4.5 million. The difference between the recognized amount and the local yield is that board A gets a grant of \$2.6 million, board B gets \$6.1 million and board C gets \$2.5 million. As the system works, you can see the rationale of it, I hope.

Let's take boards A and B. They have the same assessment base, but one has twice the number of pupils and indeed is getting that much more in terms of a provincial grant. So it is sensitive to enrolment growth or the number of pupils to be educated.

Let's look at the comparison between boards B and C. They have the same number of pupils, twice the assessment wealth, and of course the grant from the province is \$6.1 million for the relatively poor board and \$2.5 million for the relatively rich board. In the case of board A and board C, they have a wide disparity in their tax base and half the pupils in the case of the assessment-poor board, and the grant again is sensitive.

So that is how it works. In the main basic category, roughly \$3 billion of provincial money set out in the form of grants is done through this system; \$3 billion of about \$4.2 billion or \$4.3 billion that is currently allocated is done on this equity or equalization basis.

Now I am going to give you a quick overview of the funding model, the general legislative grants. Category 1 was what I call the equity category of funding that we just talked about in the previous slide. It recognizes the cost of a base program. In there the ceilings are identified and substantiated, of course, and the growth in the assessment base is also measured.

The category 2 type of grant recognizes, though, that not all boards in Ontario are on an equal footing when it comes to geography and demographics and so, because of these differences, there has to be a 100 per cent grant to these boards for various items, which I will get into in detail, to put them on an equal footing.

Finally, category 3 on this slide deals with our initiative funding, special funding, throne speech initiatives and also a number of other programs, most of which involve a local contribution. I will get into some detail about those.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Will we get a list of them?

Mr Trbovich: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Are they in the handout?

Mr Trbovich: Yes, they are.

Just quickly, category 1 is the grant in respect of our core education program. With this grant, at this level of expenditure, we expect you should have sufficient funds to provide a solid educational program. It includes in that grant the funding for special education on a per pupil basis; for every child in the system there is a grant and it goes out regardless to all boards. For every child a certain amount of money is allocated. Also, in this respect, we have the initiative money which eventually flows into kindergarten, junior kindergarten and so on. Roughly, category 1 represents about \$3-billion worth of grant money.

Category 2 is sensitive to the substantial differences in demographics and geography which those impose on a board, of course. Those grants are at 100 per cent.

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The Chairman: Just before you go on, I think Mr Keyes had a question on the previous slide.

Mr Keyes: Is not the whole secret of this process the factors you must use in order to determine that equalized assessment? I do not suppose it would take a week to give us a quick and dirty lesson in that. Could you make any comment on it? Surely that is the area of the greatest concern. The other factors that are there seem to be reasonable.

You may argue what should be a recognized amount per pupil—and later on we will get into the historical debate as to why it is different for elementary versus secondary students, I am sure—but how do you look at the boards across the province and then say, "With our factors, equalized assessment comes up"—using your example—"two of them the same and one five

times the amount"? Is it too far out of line to get a comment about that one?

The Chairman: Let's just go with the flow, Mr Trbovich.

Mr Trbovich: Okay. Yes, I think that equalization process, as I pointed out at the beginning of our presentation, is critical in terms of ensuring that we are measuring relative wealth accurately. I guess you want some information about equalization factors as applied to the base. They are composite factors, based on about nine classes of property assessment. They are based on a more than adequate sample of the sales of those types of properties each year. They are produced annually. They are gazetted 15 July. They are subject to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board up to 15 November, which is the final date of appeal.

The equalization factor, therefore, is a composite factor. It measures single-family residential properties and how they are behaving, multi-residential properties, industrial property, commercial property as a class, farm property as a class. It goes on and on. There are nine classes of property and each of those is appropriately sampled in terms of determining the market value and the relationship to the assessed value.

These composite factors are then termed an equalization factor. It is one factor and the theory is that the current assessments on those rolls in that municipality are raised to a current market value by the application of the factor, so you get a sense of what is the overall worth as of a current year of each municipality within a school board, and therefore each board.

There have been less than a handful of appeals of these factors in the last few years; certainly since 1979 when they were unfrozen and applied to the equalization process. I do not know if that helps.

Mr Keyes: That is a very good comment. The thing I hear—take a county—Frontenac county is where we are—the most common concern you hear is from those farther northern communities and townships. I think of an example—I have not had to try to justify it because I was not able to do so—where they do not have a single student going to the schools because they have all left the municipality, yet this past year their taxes went up by 20 per cent for educational purposes.

It is very difficult to argue that equity of financial burden that we place as a province on those situations. They are probably unique in a sense. It just so happens in the period of time that without any children going to the school system they say: "I can't figure this out. There are no

children even going to school right now in our small township and our educational taxes went up 20 per cent."

Mr Trbovich: The comment here is that all real property in Ontario shall be taxed and contribute to the community good, whether it is for municipal services or education or whatever. That has been a long-standing principle. It does not matter what the property is or how it is used, its market value that the assessment is based on is really going to be sensitive to its use and its value in the real estate market, so there is a connection. But all real property in Ontario will be levied upon and contribute to funding of municipal, education and other services in the community. That has always been the long-standing principle.

Vacant land pays property taxes towards education and people who are fortunate enough to own three or four homes in Ontario all pay property taxes to the education system and to municipal services. It is an ad valorem tax, a tax on wealth, and it is a tax that is only one tax of a variety of taxes in Ontario. If we were to abandon the property tax, it would be a wonderful place to leave money and escape taxation, I presume, but that is an integral part of our taxation system in Ontario, and indeed in many provinces.

Mr Keyes: I just wanted to make one final comment. I guess that goes back to them and I do not know whether in this committee we will be bold enough to ever look at that depth of the basic principle or not or whether we are probably going to coast for five weeks more superficially looking at the financing of education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are never superficial.

Mr Keyes: I was tongue in cheek.

Mrs O'Neill: In connection with what Mr Keyes brought forward, and I did work on that, I may just say that the cottage properties in this province have escalated much more quickly than any of the other property classes. I think if there is such a township, and I have trouble thinking there is a township without a child going to school, maybe not in the township but outside, then I really do believe it has something to do with the cottage values.

The Chairman: I think that is probably very true, particularly when a lot of the cottage areas have gone to market value and that has resulted in very large increases in their taxes while at the same time they do not have any children in the school system and they may be supporting the education taxes through other properties in the province as well. Mr Johnston?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Off the record, I was just saying I wonder if we could get some sort of a briefing on the situation on the cottage assessment problem, because I think we all have been hearing that from constituents, one end or the other, either as people representing cottage areas or as people who represent people who have cottages in other areas.

What is the determination of the base that all the other factors are then added to? How does that work?

Mr Trbovich: The base?

Mr R. F. Johnston: The base for the property tax assessment.

Mr Trbovich: Oh, the market value assessment base.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that what you meant when you responded to Mr Keyes?

Mr Trbovich: Every property tax system in Ontario is predicated on some form of market value.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Sorry, maybe I did not make that clear. If that is all that is in it, that is fine, but you said you have all these other factors that you add on, classes of farm, etc; that it is working off a base and then you add these various factors into it. I just wondered what the base is. It is not the market value, clearly; that is something else.

Mr Trbovich: When we talk about the development of equalization factors for each municipality in Ontario, the factor is a composite factor predicated on nine property classes. The sampling of sales from each of those classes is done on an annual basis by the assessor, so you get a measurement or relationship between the current market value and the assessment of each of those individual property classes and then a composite factor is developed, an overall equalization factor that would raise that assessment base.

Let's presume it was 1940 market value. It would bring it up to, in this case, a 1988 market value base. It would do that for every municipality in Ontario and that is grouped according to school boards. Then we get a sense of the relative wealth of each board.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was not sure what you meant by the base when you used the term.

I wanted to ask a question about special education funding, which you referred to here. Every board gets an amount per student enrolled in the board, but all the boards are dealing with special ed very differently, it seems to me. There were some fairly notorious cases recently of this.

I wonder if you have information for us on the relative expenditures per student by boards in Ontario versus the relative grant per student that is provided for the education of exceptional children in Ontario. Is that kind of information available?

Mr Trbovich: I will look into that. I think so. We will certainly give you the amount of grant per board, but I am not sure. I am trying to remember if it is reported at all in their financial statements. I do not—

Mr Burtnyk: We do not have expenditure—

Mr Trbovich: Per board, no.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is unfortunate, because again, coming back to the accountability question, it would seem to me if we move to that kind of a funding system, as we did for special ed, then some sort of determination as to how boards are actually utilizing their money, presuming that a certain percentage of kids are now being termed exceptional—I presume we can get that from ministry officials in terms of the percentage of kids in a school system who are being identified as exceptional these days. Do we know that?

Mr Burtnyk: Yes.

Mr Trbovich: The June report? Yes, we can give you that.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: It does not matter if it is really recent information. I would just like something that can be kind of a benchmark in terms of whether this funding mechanism is turning out to be the appropriate means for dealing with the special ed funding, as we hoped it would be when we set it up.

Mr Trbovich: In terms of category 1, there is a component in there now of the ceilings for special education, and it is a dollar amount per pupil. Of course, as you mentioned, boards interpret and deliver special education programming across the spectrum in different ways and that is permitted; they have to interpret the needs of their student body. We would expect that they would spend and have different kinds of programs as a function of how they might organize themselves to deliver those as well, of course, and that is not surprising to us. But to get a handle on it, that is a good point you raise and, again, it is something we will be looking at: expenditure behaviour and analysis into the future.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am very interested to hear that you had that new level of audit, if we can put it that way, of what was happening

because, if we put ourselves in the position of parents who may be at odds with the segregation tactics of a particular board and wonder if the real resources that are available are going to be put into that school system for their children, then it is really almost impossible at this stage for them to be able to get a handle on whether there is money available for what they might have considered a more appropriate placement.

If you go into the IPRC system around special ed without any of that kind of information available—it is all made on other kinds of presumptions of what should be done—it would be very interesting to see the expenditure patterns since 1985, I guess, around special ed.

Mr Keyes: Just on special education, as I was reading the documents that you have provided which cover what is here, the one that came to mind was the one where you moved to a system of a per pupil payment for special education in both the elementary and the secondary system, and it was based on total pupil numbers. I thought that automatically built an inequity into the system because, if we look at a percentage of students who are classed as exceptional in the elementary panel, it would be far higher than in the high school, and that is partially because some of them will leave the education system much sooner. But it said that the grant was based on a total per pupil grant. I felt that built in an inequity in the elementary panel where the greatest need occurs to try to facilitate learning for specials.

Mr Trbovich: Actually, there is differentiation in elementary; the special ed grant is \$224 per elementary pupil; in secondary, it is \$160 per pupil. Second, the grant is given out in that way because boards can deliver special education programs in different ways, for example, for children with exceptional abilities or gifted programs and so on. You can run that as part of a school program and the classroom teacher can create a special program for that child or you can congregate those pupils, which involves increased transportation costs, to bring them to a different school and to one setting and special teachers for that purpose.

That is expensive as well, but these are decisions taken by the professional staff within the board and the trustees themselves, and so our transportation funding in category 3, for example, does not support or fund any transportation of pupils from one school to the other for that purpose. On the other hand, the way the grant is provided to school boards allows them the flexibility of interpreting how they want to

deliver programming and that programming is varied.

One other comment deals with trainable retarded children. We changed our funding formula in that area because it was biased in one direction and if anything, the formula in the case of special education in this area should be neutral, because previously we were saying that every time you congregate a trainable retarded pupil in a classroom—in fact, we insisted upon it—we would fund that pupil. Now we are saying that that it is not necessary to get funding to deal with the needs of these children. The funding now is on a per pupil basis across the system, much like special education. That way it allows boards to make decisions about integration, segregation, those kinds of issues, but at least it is not biased in one direction. It is neutral.

Mr Keyes: Just for clarification, when I read the next sentence that followed in the text, I misread that it was going to be just the straight amount. It will maintain the differential between elementary and secondary then, I gather. Even though it is now added into the basic block funding, there will be a differential there.

Mr Trbovich: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Trbovich, you just talked about the trainable retarded grant. Is there still the need to, pardon the expression, label the individual pupil trainable retarded by an identification and placement review committee to get that grant?

Mr Trbovich: I do not think so. I am not sure.

Mr Brumer: That was one of the reasons we moved away from that grant.

The Chairman: Mr Brumer, could you just come up to the microphone?

Mrs O'Neill: The reason I am asking this question now is that it is one that has a very high interest level for certain groups of people in the province.

Mr Brumer: There is no longer any need for a board to identify the pupils as trainable retarded in order to obtain the grant, in 1989 or thereafter.

Mrs O'Neill: So a person who would have been called, in other terms, educable retarded could maybe get this same kind of grant.

Mr Brumer: That in effect was one of the problems with the way we were doing funding before, because the funding was specific for those pupils who were identified as trainable retarded—

Mrs O'Neill: In the segregated setting.

Mr Brumer: —and placed in a class or school for trainable retarded in a segregated environment. That would have generated a grant to a board. If they did not do that, it would not have generated a grant to a board. If the philosophy of one board was to integrate the pupils, it would not have got any additional grants.

Mrs O'Neill: I understand that point, but there is that fine line between people who are labelled, or have been in the past, trainable and educable. These are the people who are somewhat in the basic-level courses. I am just wondering how that is being monitored—and you do not need to answer right now—and whether the grant level has gone down at all.

Mr Trbovich: The grant went up from last year. We actually increased it. Again, I think our point here is that the funding mechanism in this area should be neutral. It should be a board decision on how it wants to deal with those special needs.

Mrs O'Neill: So it has to do with a certain number appearing in a certain number of pupils, 1,000 pupils or whatever.

Mr Trbovich: No, it no longer has to be a function of identifiable children. It is a dollar amount per pupil—

Mrs O'Neill: Across the board.

Mr Trbovich: —every pupil in the board.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Wasylo, I wonder if your work is in the area of what would be determined by some people as comprehensive audit.

Mr Wasylo: No, it is not. It is just the spending analysis as such, not a comprehensive auditing.

The Chairman: I think we will go back to our presentation now.

Mr Trbovich: Category 2, as I said earlier, were the grants that were provided on a 100 per cent basis to school boards, recognizing their demographic and geographic differences across Ontario, with the purpose of putting them so they would not be penalized if indeed children had to travel great distances or if they had to maintain a lot of small schools or if indeed there was a very small board that needed a lot of expensive specialists in the area of special education or superintendents of education and so on.

That kind of administrative layer is very expensive for a relatively small board, so we had to equalize that kind of effort, so we have a grant for small schools. Small schools are necessary in parts of Ontario because of the great distances involved in the geography. You have small

community schools and considerable distances between them. They are more expensive to operate. Beyond that, we provide a small school grant essentially to encourage boards where they do opt into alternative schools; we want to at least not dissuade them from that. The idea of fully supporting small schools is contained in this particular grant. It is roughly \$24 million, and it was substantially increased this past year; those costs have risen.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just wondering. The presumption is of 100 per cent cost of ceilings up to the—is there a ceiling for running all those kinds of schools?

Mr Trbovich: No, it is just a cost per pupil; it is expressed as a cost per pupil. It is a 100 per cent grant.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: So it is presumed that if you gave the amount of money on a per student basis there would be no cost to the local board for operating a local alternative school?

Mr Trbovich: It depends on distances between schools and the size of schools. Take the Metro board. It could have a number of alternative schools, and if you net it out, it—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was talking more about a larger geographic area. Is this 100 per cent going to a board that is huge with a very low population base but wants to operate a certain kind of school which otherwise it could not do? How does it work on down to Metro, where presumably there would be very little money going to an alternative school?

Mr Trbovich: It simply takes the distance, more than 32 kilometres from other schools, and then a grant kicks in. Small elementary schools located more than eight kilometres from other schools receive the bulk of the grant. It is a question of distance between schools, and a small school is defined in the formula by the number of pupils in the school. Anything else?

Mr Burtnyk: The grant is to cover the extra cost of operating the school, so you get the grant under the first category for the regular program and it is a grant to cover the extra costs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So some boards should be facing no extra costs, depending on the size of the community and the distance it is from another school. They might have no extra costs at all above their normal level that would be ascertained. Others, on a sliding scale, may have some of those costs assumed. Is that correct?

Mr Burtnyk: That is right, the intent is that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is there information on that to give us an idea of real school districts where that works, so we can maybe see how it slides?

Mr Trbovich: We can provide that. As well, with enrolments of less than 2,500 pupils in the board, there is another 100 per cent grant to deal with the excess cost associated with that. There is also a goods and services grant that is in place, because in certain parts of Ontario it is more expensive to operate. That current formula is really a function of drawing a line across a map. It used to be the French River, I think. It was dropped. We are re-examining that particular funding formula, because in all areas of these grants we are continually examining their effectiveness and the need, the adequacy of them. This is one area we are looking at again, in detail, to ensure that this is appropriate, that boards in need are actually getting the money. It may not be just a function of drawing a line across the map of Ontario.

Compensatory education is an important area. Again, here we are concerned about providing sufficient funds to boards to put them on an equal footing where we find, due to demographics, that there are children in the system who have emotional or behaviour problems as a result of socioeconomic circumstances and other circumstances. We are looking at compensatory funding. These are to help the teacher in the classroom deal with children at risk, those children who have problems. This is an area of funding that is very important. It is roughly \$80 million going out to provide support for those boards where our indicators are showing a need that is beyond the average experienced throughout Ontario. This is an area we are re-examining, though, the funding formula and the indicators upon which it is provided, with some current research; we are working closely with the Ministry of Community and Social Services in this area.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can we have any recent data you have on the way it works presently?

Mr Trbovich: Yes, detail of the formula can be provided and how it works, the demographic indicators and so on.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you involving the school boards in the consultation on this particular item?

Mr Trbovich: Typically, the way we operate is that if we are embarking upon an important funding change or component in the general legislative grant, our intention is to release the proposed change considerably in advance to

provide a board the opportunity to respond to it. But this area is a highly specialized area. We have been working on some research with individuals from McMaster University and within the Ministry of Community and Social Services, so at this point we are not even at a point to release our information and data, but we will at some point.

For example, in terms of the goods and services funding component of the GLG, that has been the subject of a study by an individual, requested by this ministry. Presumably we will be releasing that, of course, if we make any major changes, so the public has some sense of the basis of a lot of these changes and so on. That is our plan.

Mrs O'Neill: I think it is very good information you have brought us today. Certainly the compensatory one is under very high surveillance by many groups in the community and certainly by the boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can we have a little of your history, not necessarily now, but when you give us whatever information you can on the indices, etc, that you use, about how long the program has been going, the money changes which have taken place over that period and any changes in the indices you have used over that period as it has evolved? Would that be possible?

Mr Trbovich: Yes.

I suppose we can turn to the next slide. The category 3 grants involve a series or a number of language grants, throne speech initiatives and things like funding, transportation and so on. For example, native as a second language is one program that is included in our funding model; native as a second language, additional language instruction, mixed-language secondary schools. They require a grant. It recognizes the higher cost of providing a wider range of course offerings in the minority language of the mixed-language school.

Here are a number of the throne speech initiatives: the reduction of class size in grades 1 and 2, ultimately to the pupil-teacher ratio of 20 to 1; the textbook initiatives; learning materials; intermediate sciences, and so on. All of those grants are category 3 grants. They usually involve a local share or contribution by the board and they are usually for a period or a specific term and then they are sunsetted.

In the case of the classroom initiative, it is roughly \$80 million this year. As we move into next year, it will probably increase to about \$130 million. Then as the initiative is completed from the throne speech, it goes back into that category.

It goes into the category 1 grant, the basic equity grant, so it gets sunsetted and that money automatically goes into the category 1 grant, so that money stays in the education GLG.

I will not go into any great detail about all these specific grants, but just mention a key one that involves considerable money; that is, the area of transportation. We currently have the funding model—I am not sure of the total number.

Mr Burtynyk: It is about \$400 million.

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Mr Trbovich: Let's say it is around \$375 million to \$400 million of grants from the province to school boards to assist them with transportation. That roughly covers about 90 per cent of the approved cost of transporting pupils.

Mr Jackson: What is the actual cost?

Mr Trbovich: It is about that. When you get into an approved transportation route, we pick up 90 cents on the dollar, so it does not hurt a board very much; in fact, it does not promote efficiency and effectiveness. I think that was pointed out very clearly by others, so this is an area we are closely examining, because we believe there should be a 100 per cent grant provided to boards on the basis of need. That would be some type of student density grant. You have so much space, distance, kilometres, pupils, schools; there has to be some sensitivity to that and the province should put those boards on an equal footing with a 100 per cent grant.

But then beyond that, up to a certain level of expenditure, to cap this thing so that boards, when they exceed expenditure levels, at least will be looking at the local ratepayer to pick up 50 or 60 per cent of that cost. That would encourage efficiency and effectiveness in transportation dollars so that those dollars could perhaps better be expended in the classroom, if you will.

The Chairman: Did you say that was being revisited right now?

Mr Trbovich: Right now we are reviewing that.

The Chairman: I remember when my children were at John Fisher and in the French immersion program. Because the school was about a mile away, they were bused. The parents had decided they would like to car pool and save all this money on busing if the money could be siphoned into the classroom somehow for new textbooks, go into the French immersion program. There was virtually no flexibility. They said: "No, I'm sorry. We pay this money only if you use buses," no matter whether the other was

more cost-efficient or not. So I hope that will be revisited as well.

Mr Trbovich: Precisely. Your point is well taken.

Mrs O'Neill: Could we ask Mr Trbovich to provide us with approved routes? He already pointed out one point, where a school is a school. Could you give us the definition of what that approved route is? There is some field trip kind of stuff that does not get approved and some does.

Mr Trbovich: That is correct. I will have to bring that kind of detailed information to the committee. We will deliver it.

Mrs O'Neill: I think we are very interested in transportation.

Mr Trbovich: An approved route is home to school, and for safety reasons. Some boards have policies that they will not transport children under 1.5 kilometres from the school, but then there are safety reasons. It is hard to cross Highway 427 as an elementary child.

The approved level would track a bus route for the pickup of these children in kindergarten or grade 1, grade 2 and so on. That would be determined to be valid and we would provide funding for that for the purchase of the bus and the cost of its operation through the year. That expenditure area, of course, had grown considerably; \$375 million to \$400 million is a lot of money, so we want to encourage efficiency and economy.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do remember this discussion when we talked about extending funding to the Catholic school system and co-operation between boards, in terms of the transportation routes, etc, making them more efficient. I also recently had some bizarre interactions with the Scarborough Board of Education and the Toronto Board of Education around busing kids between the two boards when an IPRC has placed a child in another board; the frustrations around that have been enormous for the families.

I actually wanted to come back to the other matter which you had over here. I certainly would not want to make any comments at all about the reduction-of-class-size dollars. That actually predates any throne speech; it was a matter of an election promise which was much more specific about when the money would be spent. But that is not your problem; that is a political issue. Your political masters can try to explain why there is only \$80 million being spent this year on that when they promised twice that.

I wanted to find out what you meant by "the local levy may be required in respect of some of these matters." I wonder if we could get a list to which that applies so I get an understanding of where there is an onus on the local taxpayer as well as on the provincial.

Interjection.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Certainly not. I am an innocent in these fields.

Mrs O'Neill: Would you rather have "naive" instead of "innocent"?

Mr R. F. Johnston: They are both myths, so I will take either; it does not matter.

Madam Chairman: Mr Jackson.

Mr Jackson: Was he going to get a response to that?

Mr Trbovich: We will prepare a list.

Madam Chairman: I was not sure whether that was a statement or a question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was a question. They will prepare a list.

Mr Jackson: I had a question for my own interest with respect to after-school programming and busing. Are you looking at that issue? It strikes me that there are some programs in schools where busing starts at the beginning of the day for all kids but their departure from school may be staggered. I am not talking about extracurriculars; I am talking about heritage language, sort of after-school programming. Are you looking in that area in that review?

Mr Trbovich: Frankly, I think one of the options we have to consider is moving off an approval process and simply saying that there should be a 100 per cent grant based on the factors, like distance, number of children and the schools, how they fall out, the distances and so on. Beyond that we can have a funding mechanism that says that for up to \$100 per pupil we will contribute, on average, 50 per cent of the cost of that. Then anything over those kinds of expenditure levels would be fully financed by the local board.

Mr Jackson: Take heritage language, for example. We know there is a certain amount of autonomy in terms of boards determining how they are going to congregate program, but obviously there is an extensive busing expense when you can take 22 students from a given board and you are obviously going to produce that at one location. What you are saying is that you are looking at those kinds of costs in terms of a cap, and then cost that program to the extent that it may be greater than normal transportation

costs, which is students' door to school, their closest local designated school; that in fact there may be some additional local uptake in order to close that gap.

Mr Trbovich: Again, we are examining this whole question for three primary objectives: one, to promote safe transportation of children to school and home. That is our first overriding concern and that is the concern of school boards, so you want to have appropriate funding in place to meet that first objective, safety.

The second objective is to encourage efficiency in transportation. That is, perhaps, removing some of the frills. Frankly, you could use a transportation system to compete for children. One system has a door-to-door in place and a number of other programs involving transportation, and a parent says: "That system's more attractive to me. I think I'll opt for that system."

Mr Jackson: "Their bus will come into my subdivision and the other one won't".

Mr Trbovich: Something like that. In some cases one could say, "Use the transportation system for that purpose." Clearly, that does not make sense.

The other point is that we are interested in co-operation between coterminous boards. Surprisingly, there are examples of that across Ontario where it is working very well, where the boards have gotten together and they have one route picking up children from both systems. That makes a lot of sense.

Finally, we want to ensure that there is appropriate funding for children with special needs. Without going into detail, those are the physically handicapped and others.

Those are our objectives. As they relate to heritage language, I cannot comment. As it relates to any particular program in the school day, I cannot comment.

Mr Jackson: One final question: Do you have someone from the Ministry of Transportation on that committee?

Mr Trbovich: No.

Mr Jackson: I wish you did.

Mr Trbovich: We are at this juncture examining it internally.

Mr Jackson: The only reason I say that, Mr Trbovich, is that Ontario school buses are not included in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act; they are not rated. It has always been an area of concern to me that their construction standards are not subject to the kinds of scrutiny that other vehicles in this province are. Maybe that is

because most of them are built in the United States.

Having said that, I, having been a transportation review co-ordinator for several board inquiries on bus safety and so on, have some serious concerns about this. When you mention the word "safety," I just hope that when you get into that area you might involve the Ministry of Transportation; I know the former minister at least had expressed some concerns in that area. Mr Fulton really was quite concerned about it. I will leave it at that.

Mr Trbovich: I was not aware of the standard of construction of buses being an issue, but school boards are required to undertake an appropriate safety certificate mechanism.

Mr Jackson: That is on the engine. I am talking about the seats, panelling and all that stuff, but I do not want to get into that. That is not what we are here for today. I was just making a recommendation that the Ministry of Transportation sets certain minimum standards for safety, but the vehicle itself in terms of crash and impact and all that, metal construction—there are no standards for child safety in Ontario for that. Probably in most jurisdictions there are not, and in very few states in the United States. I will just leave that, but with more and more kids in this

province being transported by bus, some day we are going to have to look at that issue.

The Chairman: Mr Trbovich, before you go on, I would mention that we had scheduled to adjourn at 12 o'clock. If we were close to finishing the presentation, I would suggest we continue, but it appears that you have a substantial portion left, due to the many valid interruptions for questions. If this seems to be an appropriate place to break, fine; if you would like to go on to the end of this particular section, that would be fine as well.

Mr Trbovich: No, this is appropriate.

Mr Mahoney: Just before we do stop, you mentioned, Ron, the statistics on the dollars and percentages on transportation, but I could not find those figures in this handout. Can you get us those?

Mr Trbovich: Yes.

Mr Mahoney: Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you. I would mention to members that we will be starting at 2 o'clock sharp. If everybody could make an endeavour to be here as a courtesy to our presenters, that would be very much appreciated. The select committee on education stands adjourned until 2 o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1202.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1414 in committee room 1.

The Chairman: I see a quorum so I think we will get started even though we do not have the third party represented at this stage. We will continue with the presentation from the ministry on financing. If we possibly could have the attention of the members, it would be very helpful. Thank you. Perhaps at some stage today, I think when Mr Jackson arrives, we will reach an agreement to start on time whether or not all members are in attendance and whether or not all three caucuses are represented, if that is agreeable.

Mr Keyes: Does that include even the chairman?

The Chairman: If the chairman is not here, Mr Mahoney shall stand in my stead.

Mr Keyes: What shoes to fill.

Mr Mahoney: Boy, those are big heels to fill, I'll tell you.

The Chairman: But I have been remarkably diligent and that is remarkable for me, anyway. Mr Trbovich, would you like to continue.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (continued)

Mr Trbovich: We are now going to discuss categories 4 and 5 of the grants, provincial funding. I would like to begin with category 5, if I may. This category of grant is roughly \$600 million this year, \$566.6 million of which is in respect of teachers' superannuation payments that the province is obligated for, on behalf of school boards, towards those pension funds, and the balance is in what we term "education programs—other." They include various programs such as certain French consultative services and certain other initiatives that are board-specific in some cases and on a pilot funding basis. That category 5, together with all the other categories, represents the total provincial transfer payment to school boards. It is roughly \$5 billion and the total school expenditure in Ontario today is approximately \$10.6 billion.

If I may, I would like to turn to the category 4 group of funding, which deals with the school capital program. This operates in much the same way that the operating grant distribution mechanism works, and that is that given the approval of projects, a local share is required and is a function of that board's ability and its ratepayers'

abilities to pay. Again, for 1989 it is roughly at the 75 per cent level of support.

The next slide depicts the provincial grants for capital expenditures over time, from 1980 to 1992. By way of background, I would like to give you some indication of what the need is. Beginning in 1980, there were board requests of \$245 million; in 1981 they increased slightly to \$284 million; in 1982 they were \$354 million and so on, until we got to 1985 where there was a total of \$398 million in board requests.

It moved up significantly to \$504 million in 1986 and the grant was about \$146 million; then in 1987, the requests jumped to \$1.07 billion; in 1988 to \$1,675,000,000; and in 1989 to \$1,889,000,000. I think that is a fairly realistic number. This is well documented on each board's annual CEF, or capital expenditure forecast, a requirement of the ministry that each board document its needs with respect to capital funding. This is an exercise that is performed each year.

Significantly, in 1989 through to 1992-93, we are looking at a need of approximately \$5.8 billion in school capital infrastructure costs. A large part of it is with respect to new pupil places, but there is also a significant amount with respect to renovation or retrofit, improvement and maintenance of the existing capital infrastructure in the system, which we estimate to be in the order of a value of about \$19 billion of school properties that are owned by the boards and are community resources. That is a substantial amount of value of infrastructure that requires maintenance, retrofit and improvement.

1420

The Chairman: There are a couple of questioners at this time.

Mr Mahoney: I wonder if you have analysed the reasons for the tremendous upswing in the requests. Did someone just wake up? Was there planning or lack of planning? How can you justify or how do they justify to you such substantial increases in demand?

Mr Trbovich: I think there are a number of reasons for the emerging need for new pupil places. One of them obviously is extension of the financing of the separate school system.

The other important one is the natural increase in enrolment that we are beginning to see. We have referred to that as the echo effect of the baby boom. The demographics suggest that we have

now, and had last year and the year, before roughly two per cent per year, and will have that certainly into the next six or seven years, of enrolment growth in the elementary system.

Another important factor relates to immigration. Ontario has been very fortunate in attracting large numbers of new Canadians and that has happened in this period as well.

Finally, the one that is most difficult to predict is the migration effect, both within Ontario—we were beginning to see it in the early 1980s, moving into the Metropolitan Toronto area which was fortunately booming, even in a global sense—and migration from other parts of Canada into Ontario. This was difficult to predict, but it was a function of the immediate increase in the economy.

With these increases in need and demand, the government has responded in a substantial way on three different fronts. One, it has increased its capital grants dramatically as you can see from this graph.

I should point out that not shown on the graph for the years 1989 to 1992 are two other important throne speech initiatives, which were funded as follows: There are technology studies. The Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon) has committed \$60 million over five years with respect to that. You can look to adding roughly \$12 million a year for the next five years, into 1993. Second is the junior kindergarten initiative. There has been a capital allocation of about \$100 million over five years to assist boards in meeting their space needs as they bring in junior kindergarten programs.

Aside from the substantial increase in the allocations, the other factor was, for the first time, a precommitment of those allocations into the future. The Treasurer and the Minister of Education were mindful of the concerns of the school boards that the province assist them, first of all, in planning, and second, in bringing on projects on a more timely basis. So with the precommitment into the future of these funds, there was some certainty around the provincial contribution towards this capital program.

Finally, the Treasurer in the budget last year preflowed the funding. In 1988, he preflowed the money. Literally what we did was that given all the allocations, we issued cheques to the school boards and they put those sums into their bank accounts and they earned interest on them. It also allowed them to help in some cases with interim financing of other projects that were currently under way and that were viewed as a substantial—I think we were projecting easily \$16 million in

interest that could be earned, on average, across the system. Then this year again there was a precommitment of those funds and in a month or two we should be flowing out that money to school boards.

Mr Mahoney: If I could interrupt you there, I would like to dwell for a moment on the issue of either the increased needs or increased expectations, the fact that the funding requests across the province have gone up so dramatically. We can see that the capital expenditure grants have gone up dramatically since 1985 just by looking at that chart and that we are precommitting for a number of years. Still, when you look at \$300 million a year versus \$1.8 billion in requests for capital, it does not appear to be meeting that need.

My question really is, is that need justified? How did it all of a sudden balloon to \$1.8 billion? Even though the government has gone on and quadrupled the commitment from the previous government, the needs or the perceived needs have more than quadrupled in that same period of time. Is this a black hole or is there some way of understanding how those needs—

Interjection: Political black hole.

Mr Mahoney: It may be a political black hole, but I am not particularly worried about that because our commitment to increases is obvious.

I am really curious. Is this thing expanding to fill the budgetary process or was there no long-range thinking 10 years ago that would forecast increases in population in high-growth areas?

I can remember as chairman of the planning committee in Mississauga for seven years that we would approve more new housing in one evening than the city of London would do in five years and the comment from the school boards at the time would be “no comment.” That has changed and the school boards are working closely with the city at that level and the planning has improved tremendously over the past five or six years, but is that really the problem here? Is that why these demands have increased so much?

Mr Trbovich: I believe the demands are well documented, generally speaking. They are in the capital expenditure forecasts. A lot of this currently, in the \$1,889,000,000 in requests in 1989, deals with previous pressures.

Ten years ago schools were closing; enrolments were dropping. I think the big factor is the unprecedented growth in the system, particularly in the greater Toronto area and the Ottawa-Carleton area and other parts of Ontario that are growing at a rapid rate. Part of it is due to migration, and certainly the echo effect of the

baby boom was predictable, but beyond that these other factors were pretty dramatic. You are having families show up at schools who are newly arrived to Ontario, if you will, and it has been unprecedented and dramatic.

Beginning last year, we required boards to move to a five-year documentation process on their capital expenditure forecasts. What we look for each year, and this year we certainly examined it carefully, was consistency in the submissions and a testing of some of the assumptions for the need for new pupil places into the future.

I think the four factors I mentioned earlier explain in part some of that pressure, but today we have a backlog of need and that backlog has just rolled through the system. I guess from 1982 to 1985, we were looking at roughly \$350 million to \$400 million in requests and we were contributing about \$75 million towards those pressures and then the grants jumped dramatically.

1430

Mr Mahoney: So it is a cumulative effect.

Mr Trbovich: It is absolutely a cumulative effect. You can see it rolling through the \$1,889,000,000 in 1989, and the total over five years of \$5.8 billion. A large part of that is the backlog and the accumulation of it.

Mr Mahoney: Just one final quick question: What percentage of that \$1.8 billion is the greater Toronto area?

Mr Trbovich: It is going to be a guesstimate. Theo Grootenboer is going to check that number.

The Chairman: Perhaps I might just ask a supplementary to that. I guess I might. I am the chair, right?

Mr Mahoney: Listen, I will not argue with you.

The Chairman: It is nice to have support from the vice-chair. Have you any long-range projections as far as enrolment pressures are concerned and whether this is going to ease? We have seen long-range projections for migration into Ontario and into the GTA, but I wondered whether anything had been done as far as stress on the education system is concerned.

Mr Trbovich: The migration issue and the immigration issue are difficult to predict. They are often beyond the control of boards of education. That is a function of federal policy and other factors. We have a good sense of enrolment growth through the demographics and we will have a graph later on showing enrolment projections into the future. I guess in the central

region, which encompasses the Waterloo boards, all of Metro, the GTA and so on, we are looking at roughly 60 per cent of that pressure being in that area.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is the figure, to follow up on that, on retrofit versus new space?

Mr Trbovich: It would probably be about 30 per cent, just off the top of my head, and growing.

Mr Mahoney: There is an obvious supplementary to that too. It is that within those communities—I know it is true in my own—there are areas of the city where the enrolment is declining. You may have enough pupil places in place in the entire city to handle the existing problem, even for a number of years, but they are all in the wrong part of town. As to the sense of community, people wanting to have a school within their community, the ability of the children and the economics of them being able to walk to school instead of being bused, and the time they spend either in a bus or a school classroom, etc, have you looked at the economics from the perspective of establishing closure procedures and policies for the boards to encourage them to indeed close a school down in a community where there is not the enrolment to justify it, recognizing the political minefield you create by doing that?

Mr Trbovich: There are procedures in place for boards to follow respecting—

Mr Mahoney: Yes, but they do not.

Mr Trbovich: Each board has a school closure policy and it is obligated to have one. A number of boards have begun to undertake a rationalization of their school facilities. Without getting specific, they are perhaps coming to terms with school closures. The motivation here is, on the one hand, the high cost of keeping community schools open versus closures and increases in transportation costs, but I think there is a real need to preserve the school presence in the community, in the neighbourhood. There is a very fine balance a board must attempt to make.

Let me say that we are now beginning to encourage boards to think in terms of replacing facilities and relocating them to where the growth is, where the future is for the next 30 years. For example, this might occur—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Put all the portables on the back of a truck and take them off some place.

Mr Mahoney: They should design those with wheels on them because you do not know.

Mr Trbovich: Here is an example of a fairly good secondary school facility, in good condi-

tion, relatively new, that the board inquired about for some flexibility on the part of the ministry to allow the school to be put out for public tender for redevelopment. We supported that because the school was inappropriately located, given the population and the family of schools. The public tender for redevelopment came in and the highest bidder won the right to redevelop the property. All of the proceeds of that were redeployed to the new replacement facility. That makes a lot of sense.

There are other opportunities for boards in areas of declining enrolment to redevelop their properties. They may be into leases. They may be into shared arrangements with developers where they would get a new school plus there would be development compatible with a community use, like housing and some commercial.

These initiatives are encouraged. I think we are going to see more of those in school systems where there is declining enrolment. The urban pressures for redevelopment are there and the money is kept in the community system. Often we can get more of a future gain out of that kind of redevelopment exercise.

I might add also that when there is a school closure, the other coterminous system is given an opportunity to access that facility or use it if there is a demonstrated need. Finally, there is a protocol and it goes to other community interests, whether it be municipal—

Mr Mahoney: As long as you pay market value. I am sure it is the same issue you are talking about—in our community we lost out on getting that because the private sector outbid the region, if it is the same one.

Mr Trbovich: Usually, if it is within our control, there is a protocol and the private sector comes last and the community interest comes first.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They usually do not compete head to head like that.

Mr Trbovich: That is right.

Mr Mahoney: They did this time because the board wanted full market value and it just played a game.

Mr Trbovich: It may have been a property in the board's ownership that was outside our interest in it.

The Chairman: We have a final supplementary by Mrs O'Neill. At this stage it is final.

Mrs O'Neill: I have some difficulty, coming from the area I come from which as you know is up there in that eastern section, when you suggest that 60 per cent goes to the GTA and then in the

GTA you throw in Waterloo. Waterloo happens to be the school board that is thrown up to me the most in eastern Ontario for some weird reason, and what it gets every year. People throw in all kinds of motivations as to why that happens.

This is the first time I have heard you talk about GTA. I guess what I would like to know is, does the ministry have a boundary that it calls GTA? Sometimes I hear it includes Hamilton. Sometimes it is Durham. Sometimes it is all of Durham and sometimes it is just Oshawa. May I have a clarification.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. The question was asked as to what the pressure was in the GTA and I answered that the number I was looking at was a number we use in the ministry for what is called the central region, which is quite large. It ranges up to Simcoe and Waterloo, the Niagara Peninsula, as far as Belleville, Lindsay, Peterborough and so on, so it is quite a large area. That is called the central region. I was looking at 60 per cent with demand in that central region. We refer to the GTA internally as Halton, Peel, York, Metro and Durham.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess my supplementary on that then is on your first statement on capital. Usually, as I understand it, comes up through the regional office route. Is it fairer to talk about the capital allocations in this province according to the regional office route? I know there are many, many factors but I think, just for clarification, it might be good for the committee to have the regions. There are six, correct, in the province?

Mr Trbovich: Right; there are six regions.

Mrs O'Neill: If we are going to talk about capital and explain that process, priorities are determined, as far as I understand them, within a region.

Mr Trbovich: We have six regions in Ontario, six regional offices. There is one in northwestern Ontario, located in Thunder Bay, that serves Thunder Bay and the balance of the province to the west. We have the midnorthern Office located in Sudbury that ranges all the way up through Wawa and over to Chapleau and across and down to Sudbury. Then we have a North Bay office. That part of Ontario ranges all the way up north, through to Timmins and so on and down to Nipissing and Muskoka.

We have an eastern Ontario office located in Ottawa that ranges from Renfrew in the north, down through to the west as far as Hastings. Finally, we have the central Ontario region, which is by far the largest. I forgot the western

Ontario region located in London, from Windsor all the way up to, but not including, Waterloo.

1440

The process works this way: The capital expenditure forecasts are submitted to the ministry through the regional offices. There are people there who are expert in this area, both on the education program side and the capital side. They review and examine carefully each of these submissions. We then meet centrally in the Mowat Block and we allocate the sum to each of the regions based on roughly its need in terms of new pupil places. This is our first priority, because the first priority is actually to get a child in a school room.

We examine the relationship of the number of renovation and retrofit requests for each region relative to the total and we insist that the allocation go out in proportion. Within that, there are a series of criteria that the regional office staff apply to all the requests to put them on an equal footing. These are then ranked. Then we meet again in the Mowat Block and we come up with what we call a program of what can be fitted in to the existing allocations. That is how it works.

I am not sure whether the committee is interested in any more detail on that at this juncture.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I did not understand one point you just said. Is there a percentage within each region for retrofit versus new space? It cannot be the same for each region.

Mr Trbovich: No, it is not.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We can presume the north would be primarily retrofit in terms of its population growth, needs and that kind of thing, versus the Metropolitan Toronto area or the greater Toronto area, that new amorphous region developed in Ontario for provincial tax purposes. That region would be primarily growth-centred and its priorities would be largely in that direction.

Mr Trbovich: Surprisingly enough, it was remarkably similar. For example, there is a need for two new secondary high schools in Sudbury. They are expensive. High schools are usually \$25-million issues.

There is a great need in the central region, and again I am talking about all of the Niagara Peninsula and ranging from Waterloo up to Hastings, north to Peterborough and so on. There is a considerable amount of renovation. So we examined each region's overview of the capital expenditure forecasts submitted and we found a fairly consistent relationship, but we tried to

bend it to each of the regions. That allocation was turned over to the regional office, and then within that, it went through its priority-setting on the projects. Needless to say, the number one priority often exceeded the amount of allocation available, but we were fortunate to have the ability to precommit the funds, which helped considerably.

If there are any further questions on capital—

Mr Keyes: Mine have perhaps been pretty well answered by all the supplementaries. I wondered back in the 1980 to 1985 period whether or not you ever had a look at the ratio of work completed to requests, or was it, as you have seemingly answered to Mr Mahoney, if they did not get the money, basically the board just let it accumulate? You said that in 1980 they were looking for \$250 million and we gave them about \$50 million, or 20 per cent. Now, in 1989 and 1990, the requests are \$1.4 billion, so we are still giving them 20 to 25 per cent. The ratio is about the same.

Do you have two things, first, figures that show that if they wanted \$250 million, they did only \$50 million or slightly more and then they just let it build up and up to the point where retrofit became very significant, as well as the population? Following that, if you overlaid population trends on this particular graph, it would be interesting to see how they looked versus what is there. I assume that again we would see that as enrolment has increased, the requests have increased as well.

A final one: Did you use the figure of the five-year projection you said they do, and did you say that while this year it is \$1.4 billion, over the next five years it totals about \$5.8 million? I thought that was what you were saying.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. First, there are expectations that grants and allocations will be available for every capital project, and I did say that the capital expenditure forecasts of the boards are well documented, and that is true, but in my view a board can fund a new bus or a roof repair or a window repair, or whatever, and I term these issues maintenance issues. That is part of this capital expenditure forecast, part of the documentation in respect of it. I would not want to say that the requests are not documented. I think the expectation that we are going to fund every single capital request, including what we view as ongoing maintenance is a bit unrealistic. Also, I do not want to overstate that part of it because there is this real need.

There is the whole question of building for today as opposed to building for the long term. I

believe that portable facilities, and the technology is improving each year, are going to be with us through this period, and always with any capital program. We have to be careful with these scarce provincial dollars about overbuilding in a situation for today that is not going to be there tomorrow. There is also the opportunity for boards to use some of their current capital infrastructure to redevelop and put those funds to this need.

Finally, some boards have the fiscal ability, the financial ability to do large things on their own. That is something we should not lose sight of, that they have the wherewithal and the resources to do a lot of this. I know that a board in the GTA built an elementary school in York region without any provincial funding. If the financial resources are there, we fully expect them to participate in this issue. Clearly, I am not for a moment suggesting that this is enough money, but the amount is unprecedented and the expectation is that it will continue.

Just one closing point that we often lose sight of and I certainly almost did: How much can the system really accommodate? What I mean by this is, in order to keep the tendering process competitive so that we get the maximum out of the provincial taxpayer's dollar and the municipal ratepayer's dollar, the contracting, the tendering of these projects must be on a competitive basis. If you put another \$100 million into the system on school construction in any one year, you are going to begin to see distortions of this competitive process. I think this is a factor we cannot overlook. Especially, there is the point that to get bricklayers to complete a school in Durham is an issue that has forced the opening of two schools to be delayed this fall. To get competitive bids and keep that process competitive to get the most out of the taxpayer's dollar, we have to be mindful that the system can only take so much. I think that is another factor we should be mindful of. Given this picture of pressure on the capital front, the government has introduced legislation, Bill 20, which deals with education development charges.

1450

Mrs O'Neill: May I say one thing before we move into this other area? When the PIC, the Planning and Implementation Commission, got on its roll, it put out nice glossy books, as we all know, about the different initiatives that were taking place that were going to encourage that bill to move smoothly. They were quite well received. They were very informative.

I would suggest that you perhaps do the same for the boards that are spending their own moneys to build facilities. I do not think that story is too well known—I certainly do not think the general public knows about it—and I know there have been some pretty exciting add-ons or facilities themselves.

It is very hard to get the data on this. I know I have received some from your office, but I really think this is a good news story for some communities where there is more flexibility and it may help some ratepayers help their trustees make that kind of a decision if they are in a really big hurry.

Mr Trbovich: Basically we are asking school boards in response in some cases to go into a bit of debt, to perhaps take a little debenture over 20 years, but when they are free of debt—

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is exactly what she said. Are you going to sell that as a good news story? Go ahead.

Mrs O'Neill: Some communities—

Mr Trbovich: When they are free of debt and they have the financial resources, then it is clear the ratepayers can afford that. We have seen several examples of it and the trustees have responded. It is not an unmanageable one given that you are debt-free. That is not the case for many boards in Ontario.

I would like to turn to education development charges, commonly known as lot levies.

Mr Jackson: Could I just raise one question on that point? When you say we are debt-free, have you done any impact study on the combination of the unfunded liabilities for the retirement gratuity blended in with future capital deficit financing? Have you looked at the cumulative effect of that?

I remember as a trustee we had a hard time convincing our auditors that they responsibly had to note for the taxpayers in Burlington and Halton that our unfunded liability debt at the time was \$12 million or \$13 million. It was not shown anywhere, and that was considered accepted provincial practice but not accepted accounting practices. When you blend that in with moving to 10, and I have heard of a figure as high as 20 per cent of your budget for deficit financing, for those at the table who have an accounting background, I do not need to remind you of the implications that has.

Mr Trbovich: Yes.

Mr Jackson: I am sorry if I focused in on that statement. When you say they are debt-free, school boards are not debt-free.

Mr Trbovich: No.

Mr Jackson: They have the unfunded liability. Some, like the Hamilton board, are funding it, but most boards in this province are not. The teachers are entitled to it; they have bargained for it freely. In most areas it is now capped.

Mr Trbovich: Some boards are debt-free. Even within that context they have considerable reserves. That is the reality; but I acknowledge your point. It is a point well taken that there is that unfunded liability issue, but generally speaking, most boards in Ontario are in very good financial shape. There are a few boards, particularly in the growth areas, where because of this unprecedented growth, some of the pressures on their mill rates mount. Up to 17 per cent of the mill rate is in respect of helping to finance that new pupil place burden for the local share. That is quite high.

Mr Jackson: I will be very brief, Madam Chairman. I just did a tenure on a committee that was dealing with the modifications to the lot levy and the implications that would have for school boards. We heard from a variety of growth boards that all indicated they were moving close to and beyond the 10 per cent of their budgets being dedicated to debt service. For those members of the committee who have not had the opportunity to participate or hear about those hearings, I think it is fair to say that is a growing trend.

There is a difference in approaches between the separate and the public boards. There are a whole lot of subindicators in that.

I just wish we had a little more time for you to deal in a little more detail in that, because it is an area that concerns me. Even from a couple of boards we have looked at, you can reach or even surpass that 20 per cent and still not meet all the growth-related projected needs in those boards. Even to suggest deficit financing is not going to bring us to a point where we can match ministry expectations or public expectations.

Mr Trbovich: That brings us to the lot levy, because the lot levy is an initiative that is designed to help boards. It is directly related to providing relief on the local school mill rate because it is designed to raise up to 100 per cent of the local share in respect of a new-pupil-place project that the board would otherwise incur, and it would fall on either a debenture or the mill rate.

Mr Jackson: But your ministry was unable to give any indication to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs that would show numbers and projections that would generate

those kinds of conclusions. In fact, there are many who feel that the fund will offer only a form of revenue for debt service, not for specific capital reductions. I am not just talking about a reduction in the amount of new capital construction; I am talking about the total kinds of dollars that are generated to produce what are amounting to rather expensive increases in the cost of acquiring the land—we now know there has been about a 25 per cent to 30 per cent jump in the formula for acquiring the land, let alone the inflation rate; school sites are jumping from \$0.25 million to \$1 million in less than six months—and things of that nature which are complicating factors to this.

I know that was another committee that went into it, but I was not really pleased with the amount of information that the Ministry of Education could provide us in terms of hard numbers. I understand the concept, but we are very much speculating about how it will actually work in terms of dollars generated and what it could actually help build. Unless you have new information—

Mr Trbovich: Your question is timely, because our next slide is going to show you how it works in detail. But before we get to it, if I may—

Mr Furlong: We left that one up to you, to see that one coming.

Mr Trbovich: —I just wanted a concluding point on lot levies—

Mr Furlong: He did not look very long, did he?

Mr Mahoney: Could I have a hard copy of that for Mr Jackson?

The Chairman: We have Mr Johnston and Mr Mahoney, but I am not sure if it is on capital expenditures or on lot levies. If it is on lot levies perhaps we should wait.

Mr Mahoney: I am prepared to wait for that next slide.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Mine as well is on lot levies. I am just coming back to one thing which we have covered and one thing which I want to find out if we are going to cover. The first is on this notion of the school board actually paying entirely for the construction of a school, which sounds on the face of it to be a nice thing, if it were to take place. I am wondering what the fundamental principle, then, is behind the notion of responsibility for capital construction of schools.

Is it something where we should be saying, "If you can afford it, go ahead and build your Taj

Mahal on a local basis," or is it something where there is a shared provincial-local responsibility? Therefore, if that is the case, is that something we should be advocating: that boards should be going in that kind of direction? It seems to me that although it looks great on the face of it, is it something we really want to suggest: that the areas that have some money for all sorts of reasons might be able to do fine by building themselves schools and other places will not, or will there be a bit of squeeze put on them because in one period they will be told: "Look, why don't you build your own school? This board built their school. You can go 20 per cent into debt or whatever you want to go into to do it." I am just not sure what the—

Mr Jackson:—coterminous boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Right, sure you could. I am just not sure what the fundamental principle then is that we are suggesting for capital funding.

Mr Trbovich: Obviously not all boards are in an appropriate financial position. Their tax bases have limits to them that they can finance this incredible pressure they are facing. There has to be some provincial assistance. One option—this is my personal view—would be to then reduce all of the capital grants on perhaps a per-pupil-space basis and to say that once a school is built, it gets an operating grant. Therefore, the equity-and-ability-to-pay, the relative-wealth, issue comes into play, and all boards are then put on an equalized footing in terms of maintaining their capital. We can see that for the reno-retrofit. I think we are facing here the new pupil-place pressures. We clearly need, first, a new revenue source for school boards and, second, some provincial assistance to help with this unprecedented growth in the backlog. I think that is the background.

As to the direction we move into in the future, there are a number of options. I just gave you one example, but if we can get over the hurdle of the backlog in the future, in our view, the education development charge,—is this revenue source optional, available to the school board, if it so chooses to get into at least the local-share component, relieving its local share or its commitment towards the capital project?

1500

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess what I am coming to is that it seems to me inherent in some of the stuff we are saying that there is an interesting double standard here. The province, from on high, determines the relative wealth of various regions and the capacity to have operating grants

or, in this case, potentially even build capital structures, and while that is the case, nobody is turning around and saying to the province, "Our relative wealth as a province has skyrocketed enormously."

In fact, this Treasurer every year likes to underestimate his budget by about \$1 billion, for whatever reasons—he is either totally incompetent or he likes to have the ability to throw out extra cherries at the end of the year, which I think is much more likely to be the case—but I am wondering, does it not seem to be kind of strange; in one sense, you keep talking about the ability of these various communities to pay, etc., and yet the relative ability of the province to pay has grown enormously, and the percentage that we are paying—whether it is operational grants or not, not necessarily capital, because of the deficit that was left by others to deal with—but your percentage is dropping. Who is going to then say to you, "What about the relative wealth of Ontario versus the relative wealth of the fictitious greater Toronto area or whatever"?

Mr Trbovich: I cannot really comment. I think you made the point earlier. I am the civil servant and I really do not make those calls; so I will just leave it at that, if I may.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is just difficult again to see this result in Toronto of the accountability.

The other thing that we have not dealt with, and you may be planning to do this later on, is the notion that boards are not supposed to go into debt in terms of operational cost. Is that right? Yet, in the last couple of years, a number of Catholic boards specifically that I have known, have had difficulty with that.

I wonder if you were planning on touching that whole issue about that principle and what follows if a board does have problems, as, say, the Windsor area boards have been having in the last little while. Are you are going to deal with that matter around financing at all? I would be interested in knowing how that is evolving these days.

Mr Trbovich: I could; I do not have a slide on that subject, but if you would remind me, I certainly will send you the information on it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Send us a paper?

Mr Trbovich: Yes. Okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you.

Mr Trbovich: The other part about the lot levy initiative is this: The provincial rate of support, on average, for new pupil places will drop from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. The amount of grant, the allocation, will remain the same, but

it allows us, instead of leveraging on \$300 million or \$400 million in projects, we can lever an extra \$100 million on construction. That helps us get into a bit more of the backlog and some of the reno-retrofit.

Mr Jackson: Without interfering with the tendering process?

Mr Trbovich: Without interfering with the tendering process.

Mr Jackson: I am very sensitive to that argument. You do not want to build too many schools.

Mr Trbovich: It is a serious problem. We know what the average cost, by region, is to build an elementary or a high school. When you see some tenders come in that are considerably higher than the average of the norm, you know that the competitive process is breaking down.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I finally know what I am doing to do after politics; get myself a little construction permit, get out there—

Mr Trbovich: That and busing.

This slide is an example of a region nearby. It is a historical example based on 1987 or 1988 data; I am not sure, but it will depict for us how the lot levy process works. I am assuming here that both coterminous boards have opted into the lot levy exercise.

First of all, the boards have to project the housing starts, the data for which are available from the municipalities, and do so over a five-year period. In this case, we would see from the three municipalities about 10,000 housing starts. From that process, they estimate pupil yields from those households. Boards have been going through this exercise for a considerable time with a fair rate of accuracy. They can predict very well the yield to the public system and to the separate system. In this case, they have to document that both in terms of elementary and secondary school pupil-places.

In this case, we have seen that we have approximately 3,460 elementary public school places, 1,650 secondary and corresponding amounts for the separate school system. The total yield from these 10,000 households is 7,470 students requiring new pupil-places.

The Chairman: Just on a point of clarification, is that supposed to be "600" under secondary?

Mr Trbovich: That is 620 under the Roman Catholic Separate School—

The Chairman: No, the figure immediately to the left of that; is that supposed to be 600?

Mr Trbovich: It is 60 pupil-places, but it should be 560. It is a typo.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Her keen eye—

The Chairman: My math is bad, but it is not that bad.

Mr Trbovich: You are first person who has noticed it. How many times have we looked at that slide?

Mr Jackson: Okay, Dianne, you can do my tax return from now on.

The Chairman: I promise. You are in trouble.

Mr Trbovich: We estimate the cost per pupil-place using what we have as a capital grant plan, which provides that the accommodation costs across Ontario will be standard and meet a certain standard.

Interjection.

Mr Trbovich: Anyway, we are going to stay with the 60. Otherwise—yes, we just lost a few kids on some buses.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It wasn't my route.

Mr Keyes: It was a very young community; they are all in the elementary, not the secondary.

Mr Trbovich: It is supposed to be 560.

We can estimate the cost per pupil-place for elementary for this example back in 1987. This is based on actual housing starts. It costs about \$10,000 for an elementary pupil-place and \$18,800 for a secondary school pupil-place.

You will notice that the rate per acre is estimated in this particular school board region at \$250,000 an acre. We now are looking at, in this particular school area, around \$300,000 to \$450,000 an acre. So the development industry is interested in getting its value.

The total cost calculation: We then simply compute the 3,460 elementary school places in the public system at \$10,000 apiece and come up with \$34.6-million school cost. The particular rate of grants that that board has on that school project is 31 per cent, which means it is going to get a provincial grant of \$10.7 million on that school. And its ratepayers are going to have to bear \$23,874,000 for those elementary school places.

The secondary school: The equation works out and we find that there will be provincial grant of \$11,787,000 and the local share will be \$19,232,400.

For the Roman Catholic separate school system and the coterminous board in this region, you follow the same calculation exercise, but you will know that its rate of support is considerably higher because it has relatively less assessment, a

smaller tax base. So it gets considerably more in terms of provincial grants with respect to those pupil-place needs and its local share, of course, is correspondingly smaller. But, again, the notion of an equal burden or equal tax effort is applied in the allocation of a capital grant from the province on new schools. So we have a total local share for both coterminous boards of roughly \$50 million in respect of this \$94,676,000 new-pupil-place need.

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We know the housing starts we started off with were 10,000, and we know the local share is \$50 million. Simply dividing one into the other you get a lot levy projection of \$5,000. The legislation goes further: It says a board may charge up to 40 per cent of the residential share of the lot levy on new commercial-industrial development. That means that the proposed legislation provides that it can reduce that residential burden by 40 per cent. In fact, the residential levy in this example would be \$3,000 per unit, and that would generate and pay for all of the local share, thereby relieving the pressure on the mill rate that currently exists in this example at something close to 18 per cent.

That is how the process works. I might add that as a project is approved, in the case of a public elementary school the local share would be drawn down out of the joint account. That is a ministry call, and it is paid directly as the projects come on stream.

The lot levy is in force as a bylaw for five years. Any changes to it must go through a comprehensive amendment process involving public input, and everything in respect of the lot levy—the quantum, the calculation, the documentation, all of that—is subject to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

That in a nutshell is the proposal. I believe the legislation is still at committee for detailed review.

Mr Jackson: Were you able to get any feedback? I know your ministry had one representative at the committee hearings of the last few weeks. Have you had an opportunity to digest some of the concerns raised by the school boards? It is unfortunate that this committee has not benefited from it, but could you cover over with us some of their summary concerns? Then I might add the one or two that might escape you for the moment.

Mr Trbovich: I cannot really comment on the committee members' views—

Mr Jackson: That is not what I asked.

Mr Trbovich: —but my sense of the presentations to the committee is that some of the boards are concerned about the affordability of housing for new home owners, that the lot levy would impose on increasing the price of a house. We are looking in this example, which is not unrealistic, of roughly \$3,000 on a household. Boards within that can stratify those payments by property type. There is a concern on the part of some trustees and boards about the affordability of the exercise of imposing another tax, if you will, on new home owners.

But that begs the question of whether it will be passed through. The developers and builders are quite concerned. They feel strongly that it will be passed through and that it will increase the cost of housing. There are many factors that increase the cost of housing, not the least of which is the federal—

Mr Jackson: I was asking for educational concerns.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —Wilson's tax in this.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. That has a considerable impact on the cost of housing, I am sure.

Mr Jackson: No, I was concerned about the educational concerns. It would be your area of legislation, not on housing costs, which is a bit far afield for you.

Mr Trbovich: Okay. I guess there are three more points. There are a number of school boards, and not surprisingly, those that are facing the pressures of new growth. Both the coterminous boards in each of the growth regions support this legislation and are desperately looking forward to its implementation.

There is a concern on the part of the education community generally about the drop in the rate of support for new-pupil places. There is a concern about the continuing availability of provincial funds, grants and allocations towards capital.

Mr Jackson: Concern about the phase-in—

Mr Trbovich: There was some concern about the joint account.

Mr Jackson: Concern about the joint account, in that—I think your reference to it was as a ministry call, but boards were quite concerned—I remember interviewing two coterminous boards that were at each other's throats the last two years with the capital announcements, crying foul in terms of one board getting a disproportionate—I said, "On the one hand, you say, 'We're over a barrel. The ministry will decide whether one system gets more attention versus the other.'" They said, "We've been told that the legislation

cannot be amended to dedicate the funds in accordance with the population base."

There was a second concern raised over the fact that your implementation of this legislation triggers immediately, so everybody's grant rate got reduced on the day of the announcement. They were appealing to the government to respect the fact that there were already commitments out there that would now suffer rate downward adjustments. In Metropolitan Toronto, there were all those contracted agreements that were a result of acrimony over Bill 30. Those were negotiated with the province as a third binding party to the agreements, and those were signed off at the current grant rate. So there were substantive education concerns, not housing and affordability; those were all well documented, but not relevant to this committee's work.

The other concern had to do with this relative debt position, which I referred to earlier. I had hoped you might have been a little more sensitive to those boards that are rapidly moving into debt on the backlog growth.

This addresses potential and new growth. There is that whole group of boards who were caught, that were not addressed in your previous slide. Their needs were not being met and they are rapidly moving into debt positions; to what extent your ministry is concerned about that, is prepared to move, with or without an OMB ruling about how far school boards can go into debt.

Then there was a concern that was expressed—gee, I have lost my train of thought. Maybe you can comment on that. There were two other areas and I will recap those in a moment.

Mr Trbovich: Okay. First, if I can remember these in the order they were raised, there is considerable co-operation between boards, certainly among the growth boards, with respect to working together to make the education development charge work.

The backlog you referred to and the sudden move to 60 per cent is an issue that only applies to allocations made with respect to 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993. It does not apply to any allocations made in Metro under Bill 30, made in 1989 or previously. If there was an allocation made in 1987, 1988 or 1989 and the general legislative grants reflect that, it is at 75 per cent.

Mr Jackson: Is that an announcement or an actual allocation?

Mr Trbovich: Any announcements made prior to that 1989 announcement.

Mr Jackson: Well, that is the first, because I have asked for that in writing. I am pleased that

you have been able to come forward, because at the time we could not get a straight answer out of the ministry. That will help people in Hamilton and Toronto.

Mr Trbovich: I think you raised a question about the backlog. It is interesting that if this legislation were fully in place in 1987, roughly \$50 million of local share just in that one year would have been off the mill rate or off debenture. Clearly for 1988, it would have been a similar amount.

So once this legislation goes into place and is operating into the future, the next time we see unprecedented growth or even surprise development, this legislation will be in place to protect the interests of the school board in terms of its mill rate. It puts a lot of pressure on the province in terms of the grant support, because as the projects arise and the levies are collected and the local share is ready to go in the joint account, the expectation and the pressure will increase that the provincial grant will be forthcoming and that the school will be built in a timely fashion. On our part, that requires a lot of planning and preparation for that in the future. That is how it works in essence, and that is a concrete example of its applying to actual numbers.

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Mr Jackson: I have the three remaining points that were raised that I had forgotten at the time. The question was raised about tying the revenues to specific school sites; in other words, three subdivisions in combination generate a new elementary school and they would have a claim to dedicate those.

The ministry people from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs indicated that the legislation would be written so that that levy could be tied to that specific school site. That struck me as odd, as the corporate nature of boards would indicate that boards reserve the right to move the total revenues in a corporate way in the best interests of all the students in a region or board. The school boards present in the room at the time that was uncovered in my questioning indicated that they were very concerned about that, because that does not really reflect the way school boards operate and it does not in the sense—the same way the ministry establishes its five-year capital forecasts when they are filed in the ministry offices annually.

Mr Trbovich: In response—

Mr Jackson: I am sorry; I will just get the three off for you.

Mr Trbovich: What was the first one?

Mr Jackson: There was a lot of concern about this legislation, Mr Trbovich. Quite frankly, I hope you get a more thorough briefing on those very thoughtful presentations made by school boards on their legitimate concerns about equity issues and access to this fund. I think it is only fair, given that they have put in all that time and energy, that if this committee has not benefited from it, and neither may have you from all these points, I would like to get them on the record so at least I feel satisfied that my time on that committee helped me to try to approach this better.

The other one was that all school boards had indicated that school site acquisitions had catapulted as a result of a shift. Because of the legislation, it has triggered a major increase in the acquisition cost of school sites. The example of the \$250,000 now being almost \$1 million may even be the board you are illustrating. That is a function of the change in approach that is being taken by developers and municipal councils. I think it is fair that we understand that point, that there is cause and effect to the legislation: what you would like to achieve, but we also have changed the cost of our schools.

There was the point about dedicating the funds to specific schools. There was the time frame of the OMB, which was the third point. They were concerned that this could be appealed and they may have to return all this money or a major portion of those moneys; that the school boards in effect would have to get involved with potentially a one-year tie-up with the OMB, that those moneys would in fact have to be returned to the developer, that they would still be reflected in the price of the home. There was a lot of technical problems with that.

There were other concerns raised, but those are the seven or eight that immediately come to my mind from having done the hearings. I do not expect you to respond to every one of them. The ministry only chose to send one individual who was involved in the finance department to attend the hearings. We did not have the minister's representation there. I just wanted the civil servants to react to the concerns. They are very well documented, and I had hoped that at some point the ministry might be able to react to those concerns either to the committee—We are still waiting for some written response, but obviously this committee is concerned about some of those points.

Mr Trbovich: In response to the first point about the joint account and our administration of

it—and I think you were talking about the funds going to specific projects from the subdivisions from which they were collected—there are a number of procedures involved to ensure appropriate documentation, and that the funds are collected and expended on projects identified early on in the process and for which documentation is available.

So if there are three school projects, lot levies will be collected in respect of the three of them, but they will also be pre-approved by the Ministry of Education as part of the lot levy program. So as they arise—the development occurs and the need for the pupil places does indeed come to pass—the levies will be collected and the project will go forward. We see this as a matter of fact or matter of course procedure. The projects will be funded as the development is completed and the need for the new pupil places is there.

If the development does not proceed, then two things: There will not be a need for a project, but neither will the funds have been collected, because the homes will not have been built and therefore the building permits will not have been issued and therefore the levies will not have been paid.

Mr Jackson: The concern is the opposite, that the funds will be collected years before or at least a year before any purchaser even presents himself on the doorstep of any home. He will be looking at plans in a trailer. The province will be consciously making a decision that there will be a school in that area, but there will be no commitments, nothing on paper. You are collecting a levy and the lands are zoned for that. At some point the ministry is in a position to say, "We don't feel it's necessary," but we are collecting a levy for a school site in that subdivision. There is were the paradox is.

Mr Trbovich: In answer, they must seek pre-approval from the ministry of the projects for which the levies are to be collected.

Mr Jackson: Which we have now.

Mr Trbovich: If we do not give them approval, in terms of the regulations under the proposed legislation they will not be collecting a lot levy. It will come out of that equation, if you will, and the quantum will be something less than it is now. But if we identify and pre-approve the project, then we have a commitment in place on our part. I said earlier that there will be incredible increased pressure on the province to come forward with an allocation on a timely basis with respect to those projects for which lot levies are collected. That is true.

Mr Jackson: I will leave it, but I make the distinction between acquiring a site and eventually building a school. You and I both know that things change, governments change, times change, loading factors change. Who dreamed we would be putting day care in our schools five years ago, 10 years ago? That is all my point is. School boards identified this, and builders and developers were saying, "If I'm going to eat the additional cost, I want to make sure I can market a school being built in that neighbourhood." And there is a legitimate gap between the collecting of the fee and actually approving the school. That was identified, and the solution was to dedicate the dollars from that subdivision or to a specific site.

Mr Trbovich: The legislation does not necessarily earmark funds from a subdivision to a specific project.

Mr Jackson: But it might.

Mr Trbovich: No, it does not.

Mr Jackson: But it might. We have not finished clause-by-clause.

Mr Trbovich: I suppose we could have done it that way, but a secondary school is difficult to earmark.

Mr Jackson: I agree.

Mr Trbovich: The tendency is to go to larger elementary schools. Frankly, land use planning is dictating a lot of these things. You go into subdivisions with large lots, and the way they are laid out, we are all paying for those costs, more than we care to think.

The second point, the cost of sites: It should be known that the cost of sites was increasing at market value prior to any thought of education development charges. There are OMB cases on file where the boards have taken the developers to the OMB and market value is the rule. That was in place before education development charges came along.

However, there are some large developers who have given school sites at something less than market value. There are. I think that practice will discontinue immediately and that will be reflected in the lot levy calculation. Instead of \$250,000 an acre on a particular site, it might be \$450,000 an acre on a particular site, and all the developers in that whole region in the business of new housing will be paying those levies, all sharing in the cost of paying for those market value sites.

I guess I will just leave it at that. In conclusion, you were asking what my sense or reading is of the submissions before the committee? There

was not unanimous or overwhelming approval for the motion—

Mr Jackson: I just wanted to make sure you were aware of them.

Mr Trbovich:—but it certainly was there in the growth boards, and it is a new revenue source, something for the future.

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Mr Jackson: The final point was that we had some school boards saying, "How come one board only needs six and one half acres for a high school but the coterminous board needs seven and one half acres?" Who is putting a watch on school boards who are not trying to build huge—I think the reference was Taj Mahals, and they did not mean just the capital; they were saying, like Etobicoke—not Etobicoke, one of the Scarborough boards, out near Scarborough—they are building two- and three-storey buildings because they need less land to build upwards. With some school boards, it is all on one floor and of course you are adding two or three acres. At \$450,000 an acre, you can sure add up a couple of million dollars.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just put in an elevator.

Mr Jackson: So, I will leave you with that, but those now are the eight items that were expressed by concern. They are on record. I know that you are sensitive to every one of them, but certainly we want to make sure that our moneys are spent fairly on classroom instruction and not necessarily going into the real estate business. I can tell you from some experience, having had to sell off eight redundant school sites and schools in one year when I was a trustee, that there was a lot of overpurchasing of land both in terms of individual sites, but it seems that now that we have this formula, there may be a tendency to grab eight- and nine-acre sites. That may not be in the best interest of taxpayers. That money should be better spent in the classrooms and not necessarily on a bigger parking lot. I make my case.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On a point of order before we go on: I do not know if any of the rest of us were on that committee or not; I stepped in one day, but I was not able to be there so one other member was. Would it be possible for the chair to see if we can get access to some of the information that was put forward, either by a summary of the presentations that will be done by staff—I gather from Bob that Ann Anderson is still in the committee though dealing with other matters at the moment. I am not sure how available their report would be, but if a summary

was available, that would be ideal for us. If it is not, then perhaps we can get her in some day to give us a verbal summary of what was presented. Failing that, we could have copies of what she would determine to be the most appropriate briefs. Any of those options would be useful to us, I think, as committee members. I just ask the chair, maybe with Dr Bob Gardner, to see if we can come up with whatever is the easiest way of getting us that information. I feel at a bit of a loss without having been involved in that.

The Chairman: I am sure Dr Bob will be more than amenable, as he always is.

Dr Gardner: We can certainly do that, Mr Johnston. Ann has been preparing a regular summary of concerns and recommendations that we do for committee hearings. She is tied up at the moment in some other hearings, but we will check with her back at the shop and see what her prognosis on that is and what her schedule is. We did actually anticipate this. David and I had asked Ann if she would make herself available and she said she was quite willing.

Mr Keyes: The help you get nowadays is super.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is, eh? You can get good help these days; you just cannot get good representation.

The Chairman: It might also be a good suggestion, if we are going to have researchers come in and talk about the lot levies to a greater extent, that perhaps a ministry representative be there. Mr Trbovich or whoever was handling the ministry's side over in the other committee could come back and answer any technical questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: He will be here on a regular basis. He will not be able to stay away, I know.

The Chairman: We have, I would say, a fairly extensive list of those wanting to ask questions on this: Mrs O'Neill, Mr Keyes and Mr Mahoney.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Trbovich, I do not like to ask hypothetical questions and I do not usually, but do you see any change in the way school boards are—and maybe it is Theo who should be answering this—

Mr Trbovich: Theo or the doctor.

Mrs O'Neill: —going to reserve their lots now, their sites?

Mr Trbovich: Their sites. As you know, the Planning Act requires that land be designated within any plan of subdivision to schools and that must be to the satisfaction of both boards. Until

they clearly identify their site to their satisfaction, the development will not proceed. So that is still there.

Beyond that, some have raised the notion that the Planning Act should be amended—as in the case of recreational land, which must be deeded over to the municipality by the developer, or cash in lieu—so that school sites should, right up front, be deeded over. So that is a possibility, another option.

Mr Mahoney: The boards did not say that, though.

Mr Trbovich: No, the developers did not say that.

Mr Jackson: The developers did say that if the rules were clear and they were fair—because one developer may get hit hard in one area and not in another. So in one sense it is an improvement where everybody looks at it as a community resource. So there was some encouragement to the contrary. They said, "Tell us the rules and make sure they're fair and equitable." They are afraid that parts of this may not be.

Mrs O'Neill: If I may, this is constructive criticism. I feel that the boards still do not know a lot about this whole process that is pending. I am wondering what we are saying to them regarding the criteria with which they reserve sites. I guess that is what I am getting at. I feel there has to be some change in thinking because I do not think that the sites have been reserved in the past with this legislation or this kind of thinking in mind.

My experience has been that boards often change their sites or they abandon their sites or let them go or whatever word you want to use. I am just wondering if we are giving some guidance training and asking them to provide much harder data when they reserve a site now or try to study on a more solid foundation or criterion than up to this point. I do not know where you are with that.

Mr Grootenboer: With respect to site acquisitions, I would just like to back up for a minute on the earlier question which was in relation to the Planning Act and how that works with respect to school boards acquiring sites. It says in the Planning Act that plans shall have regard for school facilities. It is not very strong wording. That only means that a developer or a planning committee will look at a site and maybe send it to the school board and say, "Do you have enough school property, yes or no?" If the school board does not have enough then they will make provisions for it.

If it comes down to an exact location and the exact acquisition of the property, that could be at

market value and it has been in a number of jurisdictions. It does not even have to be done. It is up to the local planning committee whether that actually happens. So a school board does not have a whole lot of legal clout through the planning legislation. That is one of the reasons the education development charge is a good tool to give school boards some clout in making negotiations with developers.

With respect to your second point—

Mrs O'Neill: I have not given my second point yet. My second point is that Mr Trbovich mentioned that in the growth areas, the coterminous boards seem to be in agreement with this. In some of the not so easily determined growth areas, I am beginning to read that some boards are for it and some not. If I can make a general statement, it looks like the separate boards are more into it than the public boards. That is just a very personal observation and it may not be true. But I am just wondering what happens then. Do we have to have both boards agreeing to this? I know it is all voluntary, but if one board does and one board does not, what is the fallout?

Mr Trbovich: The legislation provides that it is optional so if one coterminous board, in this example, chooses not to enter in—let's say it is the public board—we can lop off approximately \$43 million out of the \$50-million issue. It will be 10,000 housing starts into \$10 million, so the lot levy will be \$1,000, reduced by 40 per cent. It will \$600 per unit.

The day they decide to opt in, it becomes a joint account and all development into the future is collected up on a new formula basis and administered jointly. The drawdowns from that account are on an approval basis, as we indicated earlier. So it works whether one or both coterminous boards go in.

Mr Jackson: One point of clarification. If we are going to use that schedule, we should indicate that if the government is successful in its pooling model, that is redundant because the grant rates change dramatically.

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Mr Trbovich: It might reverse a bit, yes.

Mr Jackson: Yes. I just want to make that point. If you are going to refer back to that as an illustration of what might happen in the future, when you reference the separate and public, their grant rate will adjust once they have access to industrial-commercial assessment. I just wanted to make sure we did not lose sight of that.

Mr Trbovich: But understanding pooling, we are talking about a one-sixth phase-in over six

years. We are talking about assessment growth across Ontario in the order of four per cent annually for the last few years. We will get to this later in another slide. Yes, those numbers will change, but they change every year in any event.

Mr Jackson: But they substantively change under a fully pooled model.

Mr Trbovich: I think you are going to see in this example that the separate system is still the assessment-poor board by a lot.

Mr Mahoney: Your totals will not change, though.

Mr Trbovich: The totals on the numbers will not change one iota.

Mr Mahoney: It will just be a portion.

Mr Trbovich: The total, the quantity of the levy will be the same. The mathematics is there, yes. Wait a minute. Unless, of course, you have, let's see, the elementary—yes, that is right. The mathematics will be same, absolutely.

Mr Keyes: Just on the mathematics up there, it was said before that we are moving from 75 to 60 per cent subsidy for the cost of building the schools, but it does not seem to work out that way. I just want you to give me a quick fix as to what I am looking at wrong. You are looking at around a third in the public system and up to matching there a 75 per cent in secondary, but all totalled it is still less than 50 per cent of the provincial grant of that cost. What have we done? We have dropped from 75 to 60, but I am missing something.

Mr Trbovich: I guess the way we talk, and I apologize, we throw these numbers around like 75 per cent on average and 60 per cent on average. What we are saying is that if you take all the boards in Ontario, on average we are funding capital at 75 per cent of the approved cost of the project. Now within that capital program we are going to take a part of it, albeit a large part, called the new pupil places, and we are going to move that average down from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. We are going to maintain 75 per cent on everything else, on average.

In an average board in Ontario, in this case the elementary, with the grant rate there at 31 and 38 in the case of the public and 80 and 70, I think that is computed based on a 60 per cent average, is it?

Interjection.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. That public board is obviously a wealthier board than the average. It is above the norm.

Mr Keyes: So it is getting about a third of its costs; that is all.

Mr Trbovich: Yes, it is like Metro—

Mr Keyes: We have to keep the idea that it is on average in the province that we would be paying 60 per cent, because a lot of people have interpreted as moving this from 75 to 60. Then when you use that it portrays very vividly that many of them may be down a third and of course if we took a Toronto one it would be down to zero, I suppose, to use the morning's arguments.

Mr Trbovich: Yes, and there are many boards in Ontario that would love to have Toronto's tax base and not have any provincial grants. I have heard that so many times in northern Ontario and parts of Ontario.

Mr Keyes: They would love to have Toronto's problems.

Mr Trbovich: That is what I hear as well.

Mr Mahoney: It is always interesting how many of these issues do not seem to change over so many years. Just for the committee's interest, we negotiated agreements with developers 15 years ago, called the big three agreements, which required that five per cent of the land for schools be given free. As I recall the math, the next 10 per cent was at 10 per cent of market value, the next 35 per cent was at 50 per cent of market value and the balance was at market value, so your formula rate worked out to an average that you were paying something in the neighbourhood of 30 to 35 per cent of market value at the time.

Many times in our city we have also been through threats by the council to designate the school lands that were designated in the secondary plans as being government lands to virtually sterilize them, of course to great screams and gnashing of teeth and deputations from the school board because of the loss of asset value. A very legitimate point that they made is that it results in a negative grant from the ministry. If they in fact wind up throwing the land in for free, even though they negotiated it for free or for a certain percentage, you guys still hung them out on the basis that it had to be market value that the land was put into the equation on and therefore they wound up losing money on it, referred to as a negative grant.

So if you indeed do talk in the future in terms of designating school properties, in relationship to Mrs O'Neill's question, as the way that we do recreational lands, you are going to have to deal with the ministry's position, which is even more important than the Planning Act, because I suggested the amendments in the Planning Act

could be done almost through regulation without any great difficulty. I would be more concerned about your ministry's problems.

Mr Trbovich: The negative grant you referred to: Let's say a board sells an asset that we have an interest in. We want our share back, as a province, from the sale of that asset so we expect them to pay for it, and the way we do that is we reduce their operating grant, and therefore there is the concept of a negative grant on that particular issue. But generally speaking in this exercise in the acquisition of sites, if the sites are subsidized by an individual developer or two, then in effect the individual developer is subsidizing all the other developers, because their lot levies—

Mr Mahoney: You simply give him a credit, Ron.

Mr Trbovich: That's right. You could go that way.

Mr Mahoney: You just work out a credit system that he gets a credit towards his lot levies because he is supplying the land, so it really should not pose a financial problem.

Mr Trbovich: No, and I think that is what Mr Jackson was referring to. There is the possibility of looking at it that way. I gather that is before the committee for its consideration.

Mr Mahoney: I think it is a good idea that we get the report here. I would hope that as well as a report on the concerns that have been raised—and I wrote down six; I think you said eight—I would like to see a report included on the positive side. I know that many boards are strongly in support of doing this, so—

The Chairman: I am sure we can count on research to give us a very balanced report as it always does. They will probably have eight for and eight against, just so that there cannot be any accusation of bias.

Mr Jackson, you had a final question.

Mr Jackson: Yes, sorry, I remember one more point, a ninth point. Every single educational group came forward with the concern that the rate at which the ministry funds for school construction does not reflect the actual cost of constructing a school. That is a complicated matter which you may wish to address, but that was another concern that was expressed. It is not as simple and it would almost be unfair to suggest that the separate system needs a chapel and that expands—it is not that at all. It has more to do with the standards for construction, so that when we look at your example when you see an average public secondary school now at—well, those are

the allocation of a capital grant from the province school—up around \$15 million or \$18 million, is it not?

Mr Trbovich: Secondary?

Mr Jackson: Yes, secondary.

Mr Trbovich: Depending on the size, \$23 million.

Mr Jackson: Okay; but the grant rate is not necessarily calculated on its actual construction costs. It is based on a factor which you determine, and perhaps that might be an area which we might consider since I am sure we are going to hear about this. But we did hear about it extensively because the combination of the formula not reflecting actual cost and the reduced percentage contribution per site from 75 per cent, on average, down to 60 per cent caused them considerable concern. Perhaps you might react to that in terms of where the ministry is at or if you are considering that or what the implications are. Are you monitoring a broadening gap there and to what consequence? Obviously, the local taxpayer is going to be forced to pick that up and the amount of take-up is going to be greater for the public system than the separate system because it gets less grant and therefore its contribution is larger to begin with.

Mr Trbovich: In point of fact, it would be an equal burden on both, given the way, if they are both given short change, that we equalize the relative burden.

Mr Jackson: No, you do not because the grant rate is different.

Mr Trbovich: The grant rate is a function of the board's relative wealth and so the large tax base can afford to pick up that much of a local share and a smaller tax base proportionately that much of a share and that—

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Mr Jackson: So separate boards are able to insulate their taxpayers because of limited access.

Mr Trbovich: Not at all. I think we went over that category 1 grant, and the same concept applies here as applies in that category 1 grant regardless of whether you are public or separate. It is not the issue. It all has to do with your relative wealth. An assessment-rich board that happens to be public will get less rate of grant than an assessment-poor public board. It is just a function of your relative wealth. That is all it is. It is just equalizing the local effort. That is true in the case of funding capital projects.

But the other points you made about the capital grant plan, which is really what you were addressing, are valid. The capital grant plan is updated in terms of its costs on an annual basis, but it has not really been looked at carefully in a comprehensive way—

Mr Jackson: We were told that in 18 years it has not been touched.

Mr Trbovich: The last revision was in 1979.

Mr Jackson: That was a modest revision.

Mr Trbovich: I gather it was. But consider: There are many things that have happened in that interval. We have new initiatives in terms of pupil loading. Right now we expect 35 to 1 per classroom. That is quite high, and that is an average that is applied across all educational facilities. We have the 20-to-1 initiative in grades 1 and 2, and that has to be taken into account. There are special education classrooms, program areas, furniture and equipment allowances, technology studies and the new equipment and so on and wiring a school. There are several issues in that capital grant plan that have to be made realistic, and are going to be.

Mr Jackson: You just triggered a 10th item, which was that school boards wanted soft services like rolling stock.

Mr Trbovich: That was the other thing.

Mr Jackson: That was the 10th; I will stop. There were 10 concerns expressed by school boards. If they had an 11th, it was affordable housing, so I am glad you now have it all back in perspective.

Mr Trbovich: So there are a number of issues within the capital grant fund that we are currently reviewing. Our intention is to put that before our minister before the year end, and, if those changes are employed, beginning in 1990; to make the approved cost as accurate and reflective of reality as possible so that the grant is in respect of an approved level of expenditure, given today's technology and the changes in education and so on. That is under way.

The Chairman: Believe it or not, I think we have run out of questioners at the moment, so you had better forge ahead while you can.

Mr Trbovich: I had better cut back on the slides. Is that what you are saying? All right. I guess we can go to the next slide, and we will go through this fairly quickly, with your permission.

I am going to address the question of provincial support generally. Looking at the overview of the grant in the general legislative

grants: this is the 1989 GLG, and those are the numbers that are in each of the categories of grant right now.

If I can now shift to the next one, it deals with enrolment projections, increases to date, and the growth in the number of teachers and the pupil-teacher ratios. We can see a decline in enrolment from 1980 to 1982, another decline through 1984 to 1986 and then a steady increase after those years. The enrolment is increasing now, but previously it was not. Yet you will see later expenditures over the ceiling, if we can remember those years from 1980 to 1986, when there was an actual decline in enrolment. We can look at school board expenditures in that same period in a later slide. It will be interesting.

Turning to the number of teachers, we can see that the number of teachers from 1981 through to 1985 was at a constant, even with declining enrolment, then it increases as the enrolment increases. So what is happening here is that the PTR, the pupil-teacher ratio, is dropping. We can see that equation on the next graph. I just provide this for information of the committee.

Let's look at school board expenditures in the next slide, remembering that there was a declining enrolment in that period, roughly between 1980 and 1985-86. Obviously, there is an increase in the cost of education due to inflation and other issues, but the rise in the provincial contribution or the recognized, I should say, expenditures have kept pace with inflation and so on and the cost of the core education program, but we can look at the over-ceiling expenditures as they have increased, particularly through that period of the mid-1980s and on up. This includes all expenditures.

Another way of looking at it is the next slide. Strictly on operating expenditures, in the period of 1980 to 1985, we were having declining enrolments, but you can see that the total education bill was increasing quite dramatically. There is one correction on that slide. In 1987 the GLG represented 45.3 per cent of total expenditures.

Mr Jackson: The high points are all election years, but that is just a coincidence.

Mr Trbovich: Cost sharing on total expenditures is another way of expressing it. This is on total expenditure including capital. In 1980 the provincial share was 56 per cent of the total expenditure and 62 per cent of the recognized. That is pretty confusing, but let's go to the current situation and maybe the numbers are more—the provincial share is roughly 47 per cent

of total expenditures in education and 57 per cent of recognized.

The Chairman: Can we read "recognized" as being approved?

Mr Trbovich: The approved level of expenditure up to the ceilings.

The Chairman: But they are synonymous: recognized and approved.

Mr Trbovich: Right.

Again, just generally looking at trends, remembering that declining enrolment, we have this kind of picture of expenditure behaviour on the part of school boards, the provincial contribution and that which is raised from the local tax base. You can see the dramatic increase in expenditures over the ceiling as well.

When we go to the next slide, what is interesting about this is that if there is growth in the assessment base, that means that boards have more of a tax base upon which to levy. So we have to take that growth into consideration. Because there has been unprecedented growth in many jurisdictions in Ontario, their ability to raise revenues over the ceiling has eased considerably. That mill rate increase on a larger base will generate more tax dollars. If there were no increase in the mill rate from the previous year, it would still generate more tax dollars, because that base is growing, it is expanding.

So we can see the growth in the local share of total expenditures increasing dramatically. Over the same period, it is obvious that school boards, without any dramatic increases in mill rates, in part of that period, can raise considerably more over an expanding local tax base. It is almost parallel.

Mr Jackson: In a good economy, when you are not writing off bad debt.

Mr Trbovich: The growth has certainly been quite impressive.

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Mr Jackson: But I mean in the mid-1970s, late 1970s and early 1980s, where that formula had to be watched carefully because of writing off bad-debt businesses and a couple of other factors. It is only because the economy has been clipping along at a really wonderful rate that that can have some significance.

Mr Trbovich: In Metro Toronto—

Mr Jackson: You always keep going to Metro Toronto. That is a world-class case.

Mr Trbovich: That is an example. It is growing, but it also losing a lot of assessment on appeals. It is still growing at two per cent, but the

average across Ontario has been four per cent growth.

Mr Jackson: In 1982 we had a lot of businesses go under that did not pay their taxes, and they had to write off lots of money. We had an assessment appeal at Stelco in Hamilton that amounted to multimillions of dollars lost. That was my point. It really works well and it reflects well in an economy that is going well, but when it starts to get into difficulty—I have seen figures, it has been related to me by ministry people that there have been some implications for when the economy goes bad, because people's ability to pay taxes is reflected. That is all.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. The graph shows that through that period of 1980 and up there has been no decline in the assessment base, the tax base; it has been growing constantly.

To look at the 1970s, we do not see expenditures growing because there were ceilings. You could not raise funds over the approved level of expenditures. When those came off in 1975 and 1976, in subsequent years that grew to a certain level, but this is more in step with the growth in the base itself.

The next slide deals with education funding as a picture as part of the total provincial expenditures. These are just straightforward information. You can see that it is declining slightly. What is interesting about this is to look at the ADE, which is the average daily enrolment; it is the daily enrolment in the school system relative to the total population. In other words, there were more children per capita, per family unit or whatever, in the population in 1980, and it is slightly declining. That says something about how you finance education relative to something else that is growing, whether it is health care costs or social service costs or whatever. The interesting point is that children, as a percentage of the total population, were declining slightly, even with enrolment increases that we have projected over time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Fascinating statistic. I am not sure what use it is.

Mr Trbovich: Moving right along. On that note, I would like to conclude our presentation. It has been a slice.

Interjections.

The Chairman: Did I hear you say the magic words you are about to conclude your presentation?

Mr Trbovich: Yes, we are. Of course, we are prepared to provide you with any information the

committee members need. We certainly have taken down a number of requests.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I did not let the side down, did I?

Interjection: Certainly not.

The Chairman: I think there has only been one request this afternoon, though. You obviously petered out after lunch hour.

Mr Trbovich: We appreciate this opportunity, and if there are any other questions, we would be more than happy to answer them.

The Chairman: If we could get a copy of any of the slides that were not in our package, that would be very helpful.

Mr Jackson: Especially that last one.

The Chairman: That is right. If you can have an explanation as to what that last one meant, that would be a good bonus.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is sort of like the average daily attention span of the average member—

Mr Mahoney: Which we have now surpassed.

The Chairman: It is 5.2 minutes, actually, so we have surpassed it by quite a bit.

Mr Trbovich: Would the chair appreciate receiving some detail on this year's GLG in terms of the dollars and the specific grants and that sort of thing?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Very much so.

The Chairman: If the chairman would not, I am sure Mr Johnston would. He will speak for all of us, and we will be quite happy to receive that.

Mr Jackson: I would certainly like those columns returned to this booklet that I have been raising the last couple of years, which mysteriously disappeared two years ago. I know that you keep them.

Mr Trbovich: Actually, yes. You are referring to the three-year statistics and certainly the education community is interested in that and the various interest groups. We are actually undertaking to provide more information.

Mr Jackson: Do you mean the same level we had before?

Mr Trbovich: Considerably more detail.

Mr Jackson: That would be great.

Mr Trbovich: The computers allow us to do that, even with the rising—

Mr Jackson: I have seen the printouts. I just took six and a half months to get them.

Mr Trbovich: It is a lot of work.

Mr Jackson: I know it is.

Mrs O'Neill: I have a comment, Madam Chairman. I have been looking at these documents for a long time and I have to say that this particular GLG document that came out in reference to the 1989-90 year is exceptionally clear, understandable and logical. The categories are the best explanations I have ever seen of them, and I do feel that certainly the general public—and maybe you were doing it in preparation for this particular committee, I have no idea. I relayed that information to Mr Ward at the time, and I certainly want to say the same publicly to you, because you are certainly the people who must have worked very hard on this.

I know educational finance is a very high profile item in the province right now, and this helps everybody understand it better.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think we should put a red trillium on it and send it everywhere.

Mr Mahoney: Good idea.

The Chairman: It has been done. Do any members of the committee have further questions of the ministry representatives before they depart?

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, but luckily there are lots of gaps to call them back later.

The Chairman: We would appreciate your willingness to answer questions at a later date, maybe not even in person, but I am sure the ministry will extend its usual co-operation to us in supplying information. We very much appreciate your presentation today, and your patience in answering the many questions we had. I think, at the end of the day, we are maybe not totally clear on the financing of education in Ontario, but certainly a step closer than we were this morning. We very much appreciate it.

Before members rush off, you will notice that we do have the tentative agenda. There are a couple of gaps where people had planned to make presentations and obviously found it very difficult to do so in a timely fashion, so they have withdrawn.

I will mention one on Monday 18 September in Kingston at four o'clock. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation for Northumberland and Newcastle has withdrawn recently. Another change is the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools which was on Monday 2 October at 11 o'clock, the last page. It is now on Thursday 14 September at 10 o'clock, the first page, because two groups, the

10 and 10:30 presentations, wish to do theirs back to back.

Mr Keyes: So the 11 goes to 10 o'clock where it is already slated.

The Chairman: That is right. We will have a vacancy on Monday 2 October. We have already asked if the Metropolitan Separate School Board could move to Monday 2 October from Tuesday 3 October, and at this stage it does not appear that the board can make that movement.

Right now the schedule for Wednesday is as set. We have tried to move a few of those people further up to expedite it, but we can perhaps conduct some business of the committee in those gaps that we have.

Tomorrow morning, Tuesday 12 September, we will have Dr Shapiro at 10 o'clock in committee room 1. In the afternoon at two o'clock we will have Professor Ian Macdonald, who wrote the very famous or infamous, whichever way you regard it, Macdonald commission report. If you have not had a chance to look at it, research has done a summary of the Macdonald recommendations.

Mrs O'Neill: Will Dr Macdonald be bringing people who served on the committee or will he be coming alone?

The Chairman: My information is that he will be on his own.

Mrs O'Neill: Is there any hope at all of the ministry's providing us with the things that have been implemented some time before noon tomorrow?

The Chairman: Linda, do you know if that information is readily available?

Mrs O'Neill: It certainly was readily available up to June or October 1988 because I spoke on that several times in my previous role. I have no idea where that information is now. That is rather an old date. I am sure other stuff has been implemented, but I think it would be very helpful.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Nothing happened after you left, Yvonne. I guarantee it.

The Chairman: Perhaps we will leave that with Linda. Perhaps you can get a summary of recommendations that have been implemented by the ministry or a chart indicating which have and which have not.

Dr Perry: It has been updated. We are working on that.

Mrs O'Neill: My other question is, do you have any idea of our travel arrangements next week—I know about the Kingston business—

about when and how we are leaving Kingston and then what about Sudbury? Have I got that on a piece of paper that I have not found?

The Chairman: Mr Keyes has very graciously invited members of the committee and staff to a barbecue which he is hosting in Kingston on Sunday night, since we are starting first thing Monday morning, and members have indicated to the clerk what travel arrangements they wish. Right now we are in the midst of booking train accommodations that will leave Kingston at six or seven o'clock and go to Ottawa Monday night.

Mrs O'Neill: So we will not be in Ottawa until nine o'clock Monday night. Is that what you are telling me?

The Chairman: That is right. They have not been confirmed by the travel agent so if there is an earlier time—

Mrs O'Neill: You are telling me that I will not be in Ottawa by seven o'clock Monday night.

The Chairman: I think that is quite likely.

Mrs O'Neill: What about the next night?

The Chairman: Because we have an extremely full day in Ottawa, we will stay in Ottawa Tuesday night and fly to Sudbury Wednesday morning.

Mrs O'Neill: So we are going to fly from Ottawa to Sudbury.

The Chairman: Yes, and I believe our flight leaves at approximately 9 am on Wednesday 20

September. Then we have our presentation from Sudbury on Wednesday afternoon. We have requested that the travel agent book us out on the 5:30 flight from Sudbury to Toronto on Wednesday. Then we are back in Toronto on Thursday.

Because we have a very full day the following Monday 25 September in Windsor, we again have suggested that members either go late Sunday or first thing Monday morning on the very early flight in order to begin our hearings on time. If you have not made any special arrangement with the clerk as far as your Sunday flight is concerned, then please contact him immediately after, or if you just want to confirm what we have for you.

Mrs O'Neill: So we are flying out of Windsor on Monday night.

The Chairman: On Monday night we will fly out of Windsor at six o'clock, it appears. Of course that is all subject to change, subject to availability and so on and so forth. Are there any other questions?

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is agreement that we can start.

The Chairman: Yes. I have a note from Mr Jackson saying that we have consensus to start on time at 10 o'clock, regardless of caucus or member participation. As a courtesy to our presenter, we would ask you all to be here at 10 o'clock sharp.

The committee adjourned at 1615.

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From the Ministry of Education:

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Burntyk, Wayne A., Chief Officer, Education Grants Policy Section, School Business and Finance Branch

Wasylo, Walter, Senior Manager, Education Expenditure and Financial Analysis Section, School Business and Finance Branch

Brunner, Leon, Manager, Education Grants Policy Section, School Business and Finance Branch

Davis, Hon William G., Former Premier of Ontario



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Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 12 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, 12 September 1989

The committee met at 1004 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: I recognize a small quorum, but I did threaten yesterday that we would be starting on time as a courtesy to our presenter today, Dr Bernard Shapiro from the Ministry of Education. I think we should honour that and get started relatively on time.

We are continuing to look at the financing of education in Ontario, and I am very much looking forward to what Dr Shapiro has to say today from the ministry perspective and from his years of experience in the education field. Dr Shapiro, welcome to our committee.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Dr Shapiro: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I do not intend to make a lengthy presentation, because I want to allow the maximum amount of time possible for questions and response with members of the committee. As I know my colleagues were here yesterday giving you some outline of the technical structure of the granting process in education, I thought I would spend a little bit of time just briefly giving some historical perspective, then talking about some of the general ideas one needs to take into account in educational finance, and finally some of the issues we are trying to make progress on and some of the challenges that remain.

Historically, all I really want to recall to the committee is the changes that have taken place, let's say in the past 15 years. I am not trying a general historical treatment of the past century or so of public education.

Historically, for elementary and secondary education in Ontario since 1975, the costs have risen from about \$2.5 billion to about \$10.5 billion. That is the change in the last 14 years. If you put that on a per pupil basis, the costs have risen per pupil from about \$1,300 or \$1,400 to about \$6,000 per pupil. In other words, there has been about a little over a fourfold increase in the period since 1975.

These increases have a whole variety of sources. They are not all attributable to the same thing. They are partly due to inflation, but they

are also partly due to the greater expectation the public has in terms of its own schools: French immersion programs, for example; junior kindergarten programs is another example; improved transportation services to and from school; the expansion of services in adult education, etc. There is a whole series of things that schools did not do before that they are expected to do now, so that is another source. You have inflation on the one hand, changes in expectations on the other.

There are also changes in working conditions. There is more preparation time for teachers, which of course directly increases the cost of education to the taxpayer. There are more specialists inside the professional staffs of school boards and there are a great many pressures for smaller class sizes.

To proceed with a sort of series of changes, there are also just changes in the demographics of the province. Population shifts to, let's say, the greater Metro area have resulted in enormous needs for new capital that cannot be accounted for by the sheer numbers of students. It is not the number of students that is increasing so much as it is that the places where they are are changing. Therefore we have empty schools on the one hand and desperate need for schools on the other.

Immigration policy is another demographic change that has been important in a sense, requiring a dramatic expansion in English-as-a-second-language programs.

The ageing teacher population is another source of demographic change, because it means higher salaries and higher increments due to additional experience, and we have the increasing enrolment since 1985. Remember we had a period of decreasing enrolment. Since 1985 and at least for the next five or six years we have increasing enrolment, partly because of immigration, partly because of the echo effect of the baby boom and partly because of the expansion of the junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten programs. There are more four- and five-year-olds in the system than there were before.

Finally, in addition to all of the changes due to inflation or expectations or working conditions or demographic shifts, there are also the initiatives undertaken by the government itself which contribute to the increased costs of education.

There is special education and the huge expansion in the provision of special education programs. There is a reduction in class size in grades 1 and 2. There is the expansion of the heritage languages program; the adult basic education program; French-as-a-second-language program, to say nothing of the French-language school board and minority-language governance provisions; separate school extension, to coin a phrase, so to speak. Child care services are increasing, technological education is increasing, new support for computer programs and intermediate science programs, etc.

All these factors combine to produce what has been an increase in cost in a relatively short period. Roughly speaking, there has been a fourfold increase in cost per student in the period since 1975.

At the same time the costs were increasing, of course the competition for provincial dollars was also increasing. The proportion of the provincial budget being devoted to elementary and secondary schools has gone down in that 15-year period. It has gone down from about 16 per cent to about 10 per cent. Those are approximate. There is no use talking in decimal points, I do not think, at this particular point.

1010

Part of that just reflects a lower number of students in the school. There are also about 300,000 or 350,000 fewer students in the system now than there were in 1975 and the proportion of the population that is of school age has also decreased. It has gone from about 25 per cent to about 19 per cent. Some of that can be attributed to a simple enrolment shift, but some of it is just a question of competition for other sources of expenditure on behalf of the provincial government.

So in addition to the fact that there has been an increase in cost for a variety of reasons which you have already gone through, there has been a decrease in students, although it is beginning to increase again now, and a decrease in the proportion of the provincial budget devoted to elementary and secondary education.

Finally, on top of all that, there has clearly been a shift in the source of the resource, so to speak, in where this money is coming from. It is true it is coming, in the long term, from the individual taxpayer—there only is one taxpayer—but nevertheless, in terms of how this conversation is normally carried on, there clearly has been a shift from the province to the local school board; that is, in 1975 the provincial share of the

total expenditure was 61 per cent, and in 1988 it was about 45 per cent.

Although the absolute dollars have gone up enormously, nevertheless a proportionate share is more with the local school board now than it was in 1975. Before going to the finance issue in a little greater detail, I thought I would share with you three general points that I think are worth making, so that we understand something about the context in which, at least I see, the question of education will commence.

The first is that one cannot think really deeply or seriously about education finance without involving oneself in the other areas of government finance at the same time. Just to give you an example, if you are going to consider seriously the question of the property tax as an appropriate or inappropriate source of funding education, you have to think about municipal finance. You have to think about the other sources of government revenue and how that is raised.

Just to give another example, when we were discussing the question of the sharing of commercial-industrial assessment by separate school boards and boards of education, other interesting models came to mind; maybe, for example, the schools should abandon the property tax, that should be vacated to the municipal level of government, and schools should be all funded centrally. So the province would not give municipal grants but it would give them sole access to the property tax and we would fund the school centrally, as Quebec does, just for an example, and a number of other provinces as well. It is not an unusual model.

Maybe we should use the income tax differently than we do. There are all kinds of options, many of which we will canvass in the Macdonald report itself and you will hear about them, I am sure, when Mr Macdonald speaks with you.

All I wanted to say for the moment was that if we are not going to consider the whole range of finance issues, and you cannot always be considering the whole, then we are limiting the possibilities, because if you really want to think very deeply, you have to look back to the beginning and ask yourself: What is the appropriate way to proceed if we are considering a general reformulation of the province's financial arrangements?

The second point I wanted to make was that in the current system, there is one basic unresolved tension, and perhaps it is deliberate. I am not sure it should be resolved, quite frankly, because it is so interesting, but it does produce difficulty. The tension is between local control and central

control; that is, on the one hand we have provincial policy, and on the other hand we have local school boards. This gets played out in a variety of different ways.

I know you are interested in the committee on the question of accountability. Is the Ministry of Education or the provincial government to be accountable, and if so, for what? Are the trustees who are locally elected to be accountable, and to whom, and if so, for what?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Good question.

Dr Shapiro: I have interesting answers, actually.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have been waiting for them.

Dr Shapiro: The question of to what extent we should allow local boards to choose local options: Should boards be allowed to have any choices different, because of their conditions or their special situation, than any other board? Should we allow boards to have local choices about what they offer, how they offer, how much they spend, etc?

This becomes difficult, because of course we are interested in both equality and equity, which is something I will get back to in a little while, and as soon as you allow local choice, especially when you are relying on a resource that is not evenly distributed throughout the province in terms of the property tax, local choice means difference.

But difference does not mean lack of equity in principle, although it might actually mean it in practice. That depends on how it gets worked out. We establish ceilings, but boards have unlimited access through the local tax base. We talk about ceilings, but we do not bargain. Collective bargaining goes on at the local level between a board and its teachers.

There is a whole series of unresolved tensions between central control and local control, and you do not have to look far for the alternative examples. If you just look at the other provinces in Canada, you can see how different ones have worked it out and on different points in that continuum. It remains unresolved in Ontario and to some extent unresolved in all provinces, but I think it remains particularly unresolved in Ontario as we try to have the best of both worlds, that is, providing local option without allowing the opportunities available to young people to differ by accident of their place of birth.

Finally, as the third of the general points I wanted to make, I think we should keep in mind, as I am sure you do, that whatever system you have, it should be in the service of an idea. The

system of education finance does not exist for its own sake. It is not simply an accountant's technique. We need accountants to help operate it, of course, and to do it properly, but nevertheless that is not what it is for. It is to achieve an idea that you are trying to realize through the policy framework under which you are operating.

I thought I would begin, before I go the issues that are of particular interest to you, to talk very briefly—and I would be glad to explore it further later on if you have questions—about the idea that I think we are trying to serve in education finance in this province. That is, I want to talk about the idea I am trying to think about when I act as the deputy minister in terms of the objectives we have for the schooling system.

I think, to oversimplify it because we do not have a lot of time, there are at least two functions of the schooling system that need to be served by the finance system that supports it. One is what you might call a more narrowly educational function, and the other is a more broadly conceived social function. It is important to remember that the schools are designed to do both, especially in a time in which we tend to have very materialistic kinds of concerns at the forefront of our mind. We need to remember that there is a social function to be served by the schools and that it does not come free.

To focus first on the narrower educational function, partly because it is narrower, and again to dramatically oversimplify, for me the schools have two functions in the narrow educational sense. One is the development of a repertoire of skills that helps the student access the future. The second is anything you can do to facilitate the transition to adult life, whether that adult life is adult life as a worker, as a citizen or just as an individual human being, because it is all three of those for every person.

In terms of the particular skills issue on which I am particularly focused as a matter of interest, I think it is important to suggest that the idea I have is not simply limited to what is generally referred to as the three Rs, however you define those. The cognitive skills are crucial for people, of course, but it is not the particular content that is so important, although you need it to learn. What we need to focus on in terms of skills for school is two things. One is the ability to learn, but the other, and it is even more important, is the will to do so.

This is a period of increasingly rapid change which we seem to believe we are always on the threshold of. I sometimes think we are never

really going to change anything, but nevertheless we always seem to believe we are on the threshold of very rapid change. If we are, I think that what is crucial is not simply that you know how to do something but that you welcome the opportunity to do it, that learning something new is reinforcing for its own sake. If, due to the vagaries of the international marketplace, let's say—and remember that prices in the international marketplace change far more quickly than our institutions—there is a change that makes, for example, a particular skill not as relevant to the workplace as it once was, and the time has come to relearn, to retool and to get prepared for something else, we need two things: We need a series of social programs to enable that to happen without an individual's life falling apart, but we need on the part of the individual an attitude that sees that as something exciting for him or her as well as for the society at large. So the will to learn is as important any day as the ability to do so.

1020

That is just the educational function, and it is relatively narrow. I only mean by that, not that it is unimportant, but that it is easier to define. What we have to remember is that in this province, this is going on in a very rapidly changing social context and essentially that could be reduced to the understanding that Ontario is a much more heterogeneous place than once it was. If multiculturalism means anything, it means we are going to somehow find a way of celebrating our differences while sharing enough in common that we do not fly apart just from the centrifugal forces that we ourselves put in place.

What that means is that we are going to try to extend to many more different kinds of people opportunities to be themselves and to become a part of Ontario than had been the case in the past. Anglo-conformity is out, so to speak, and to put it in a relatively crass way, and multiculturalism is in. To make that myth reality requires a kind of investment, not only of money, incidentally; it is not simply a question of money.

In that context, I have to say that on Saturday night I experienced for the first time in this province the disgrace of addressing a group partly in French and being heckled because I used the language; but it gives you some sense of how far we have to go in terms of realizing the social dream that we have in mind. It is important to understand that if we do not take that into account as we develop our system—it is not that we can get there just by wishing it—we will miss the boat and not prepare the kind of future that would

represent an idea that a good education finance system would be worth supporting.

That is just by way of background, and perhaps I can just end that by saying that I approach this whole problem in terms of what I call the assumption of the fortunate fifth. Let me say a little bit about what I mean by that. If we are to succeed in maximizing the value of the human capital we have in the province inside the social context that I am describing, it is going to be more expensive. That is, it was easy to educate the people like me in the time in which I was young and being educated. Everything was going for us. We were part of, in a sense, the establishment. We had the values of that establishment. We did not attempt to spread those values or to incorporate others into them, and people who did not find that congenial did not find it congenial; too bad.

That was a much simpler, easier, more forthright in a sense, kind of task and it was much cheaper. If we are going to be able to educate properly in this province all of the people we need to educate, what I call "the fortunate fifth," which are people like me, people who represent the kind of middle-class background or professional background that I represent, are going to have to be willing to expend a very great deal more resource than we have previously been accustomed to doing because it is going to be more expensive.

It is not only a question of money. When I say expensive I do not just mean money because it means time; it means imagination; it means co-operation; it means a lot of things that are not just dollars and cents. By expensive, I simply do not mean the level of billions that you add up to. It does take billions, but it is not only that. It is a question of commitment and the other resources that will be provided as well. It remains to be seen in western society as a whole. It is not just a question of Ontario, certainly not just an Ontario question, of whether the fortunate fifth will turn out to be willing to realize and to develop the consequence of the rhetoric that we so frequently use.

In the meantime back at the ranch, so to speak, what I am trying to do as a Deputy Minister of Education in dealing with the financial system we currently do have, one in which we are not at the moment—not to say I do not mean this as an announcement of government policy since I would not know that—re-examining the entire tax structure of the province from the beginning. I guess I have been concerned about four issues, three of which are ones that are of particular

interest to this committee. Those three are accountability, the sort of equity-equality question and the adequacy question. The fourth is one that is perhaps a more of an administrative issue than anything else, but it is one that is close to my heart so I will mention it first, and that is a question of simplicity.

That is, I have been trying to think of ways in which, without causing harm to the system, because the system is more fragile than it sometimes appears, we can simplify the method of education finance so that ordinary people can understand it. I have often said there probably are three people in the Ministry of Education who understand the general legislative grant, but there are probably not many more than three. I just hope there are three.

I think that perhaps overstates it a little bit, but it makes the point. That is, if we are going to have public education, an ordinarily interested citizen should be able in five or ten minutes to understand how it is that the system gets funded. That is not possible at the moment.

So we began last year, and will continue this year and it will probably take us four or five years, I think, to get there, to dramatically simplify the structure of the general legislative grant, simply so that it can accomplish two purposes at the same time. One is that you can explain it to people more easily. The second is you can use it more imaginatively because when you can understand it, it becomes possible to have public discussions about whether it is appropriate.

Otherwise, discussions get so arcane so quickly that people lose interest, give up and otherwise consign you to one of Dante's levels of hell, I guess, as the best they can manage in the context you have given them. So simplicity is something important for me. It is not a major substantive issue. I do not want to say it is. That is not the point. It is just that I think in order to enable and encourage public discussion, we need to be simpler than we are.

I am not, I do not think, overly naïve in this respect. I do recognize that once we simplify it, 10 years later it will have accumulated the barnacles that will make it complicated again, because public policy is a complex process, so every once in a while you just need to strip it down in order to allow it to build up again, and then you repeat that process over time.

Let me now move into the three areas that are of some more particular interest to the committee. The first I will deal with is accountability. Accountability is an "in" word these days.

People are into accountability, it would seem, and it is repeated frequently and used a lot in speeches and things of that sort.

I think it is important to differentiate between different kinds of accountability, not only to different people to whom you might be accountable, or different groups, which is one thing, but there are different things you might be accountable about. There is what I call the auditor's accountability. That is, are you defrauding the public? That is, are you spending the money for inappropriate purposes? Another part of the auditor's accountability can be, are you giving value for money? It is a more comprehensive audit approach. There is that kind of accountability.

Then there is what I would call the substantive accountability. Are you achieving the objectives that are being set out? We want to get to place A. Are we getting there, or to what extent are we getting there, which is the more sensible question. Finally, there is the kind of what I would call access accountability. That is, if a member of the public wants to know something about the system and wants an answer about something, can he or she get it? That is, is the institution responsive? I guess that is another way of putting it.

So there are at least those three different kinds of accountability, the substantive issues in terms of the educational objectives, the financial issues in terms of the expenditure of public money and then the access issues, the question of, can I get to the system? Whether I have a child in it or not, I might have a question. I suppose it is more likely if I have a child, but even if I do not I might have a question and to whom can I go and how can I get an answer, or do I just get ignored? It is the problem.

So let me just handle each of those a little bit differently. On this substantive responsibility issue, the question of have the educational objectives been achieved, we have had a shift historically, and it is a typical pendulum shift you see in large-scale public endeavours like schools. That is, historically that was considered a provincial responsibility. We had the inspectors and we had the province-wide exams, at least for grade 13. That became a local area responsibility. It is hard to say when, let's say the 1970s certainly. To say the 1970s, I think, is fair—the 1960s and 1970s, in any case. We now find ourselves moving gradually, not back towards inspectors and province-wide exams the way we had them before, but certainly to more provincial interest in the substantive accountability of

school boards in terms of the achievement of the educational objectives.

This has two kinds of aspects to it. One is a need to specify more clearly what those objectives are. In effect, there is a need to collect information about the extent to which they are being achieved and to share that information with parents and taxpayers.

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This is something that is new to the present generation of ministry policy and renewed interest in accountability. It is not new historically to Ontario as a whole.

The ministry has no interest in individual students in this area. This is regarded as a responsibility of the local school board. We have an interest in province-wide baseline data maintained over a period of years to give us some sense of where we are going relative to the kinds of objectives we are setting.

On the financial accountability side, school boards of course are all audited. With the ministry we have the Provincial Auditor, etc., so I think the matter of literal defrauding of the public, that is, the inappropriate expenditure of funds by school boards, long has been well under control. I do not think school boards do it and they all have processes in place to make sure that does not happen. So from my point of view at least, that is not a problem relative to financial accountability.

We are beginning to develop some new models in this respect inside the ministry itself. You may have heard this from my colleagues yesterday; I do not know whether you did or not. We are going to be examining more carefully the pattern of school board expenditure, the relation of expenditure to outcome and things of that sort. In addition, in response to a request from the Provincial Auditor, we will be designing sample processes for the audit of transfer payment agencies. So on a sampling basis, not on a province-wide basis, every year we will be doing some auditing of some school boards so that we can report to the Provincial Auditor the findings in terms of the objectives that the ministry has and the kinds of achievements the school board is providing.

So in both those senses, in the substantive sense and in the financial sense, although the system is far from perfect and there are lots of things we can do to increase its value, I think the policies are well under way and well in hand.

The third issue, which is what I call access accountability, I think is a much more complex situation, because this really becomes a problem

in certain special areas of the province. It is a question really of decentralization or lack of it, depending on the situation. It is really repetition of the kind of tension I mentioned earlier between the boards and the provincial government, but this time it is within a board, between the central administration and the local schools. We do not find we have many inquiries and concerns expressed about access accountability in small school boards. People seem to know each other better. Certainly there are fewer of them there and there are fewer layers of administration. The whole thing is more directly accessible to individual members of the public. We do get express concerns from larger school boards where parents sometimes have the experience, or the felt experience, at least, of not being attended to in a way that they would find appropriate for themselves as parents. We do not tend to get this kind of comment from people who are not parents. Naturally they would not have the same needs for access to the system.

You never get a response that suggests that if you call up and ask to see someone, you do not get to see the person; it is not that kind of thing. It is when you get to see them that the problem arises. I do not know whether it is a question of language, bureaucracy or a combination. I do not mean language in the sense of someone who has literally a different language such as Chinese, as opposed to English or French. I am really talking about jargon as opposed to anything else.

I think we do face a problem that we will have to deal with, especially in working with the larger school boards in the province. This remains a challenge for the future, as far as I can tell, to make sure that access accountability is well in hand. Some school boards are very imaginative and have quite large-scale community outreach programs.

Let me just step back for a second. This is the easiest way I can put it. I often comment on the fact that most things that most people think about schools they have learned from people employed by the system. Interestingly enough, they do not seem to learn it mainly from their children; they seem to learn it mainly from teachers, secretaries, custodians and principals, etc. Survey after survey tells us that what they know they learned from people employed by the system.

The challenge is to create a generation of educational professionals who regard community building as part of their responsibility. I think that is a slightly different notion from the one that has been customary in the past. I think it relates to the question of the heterogeneous communities

that I talked about earlier. It is a far more complex problem in Metro Toronto than it is in Dryden, not because people are smarter or dumber or anything silly like that. It is just because people are more different. There is a greater range of community; there is a greater range of people in the area.

We will have to come up against the choice in the fairly near future about the priority that this is going to have, because one of the issues that will remain for education and the financing of education policy in general is, of course, that the number of things we ask schools to do far exceeds any imaginable resource we will provide them in order to accomplish it. So choices are going to have to be made.

It is hard for me, at least, to imagine something very much more important than access accountability, since it lies at the base of what it means to be a publicly funded school system, but I think there are lots of things we can do. It is not only a question of school organization; for example, it is a question of increasing the popularity of school elections. One of the ways of getting better access accountability is having much higher participation rates in municipal elections for school boards so that more people feel more represented by the trustees who are elected in order to represent them. There are a lot of different ways it can be accomplished, but it remains, at least in my view, a challenge for the future.

Let me move on to "equity/equality." These words constantly get paired together. They are not the same thing. I try to use them in a sort of straightforward definition, if any definition of these terms can be called straightforward any more. There is so much affect associated with them. I try to use "equity" as a synonym for "fair" and "equality" as a synonym for "the same." That is probably oversimplifying, but it is the best that I can do.

It is equity that we are trying to achieve, and we cannot achieve it through equality. If we spent exactly the same amount per pupil in every board of the province, we would not have an equitable system. We would have, in a certain sense of that word, an equal system—they would all have equal amounts of money—but we would not have an equitable system, because the problems are not equal. There are different ranges of problems facing different boards in the province.

Take the most obvious example. I am committed to the notion that the public school boards of the province, the boards of education, face a

more complex task than the Roman Catholic separate school boards, only for the reason that they face a more heterogeneous community, not for any other reason. It does not have to do with the students themselves. It has to do with the heterogeneity of the community to which you must respond, and the more heterogeneous that is, the more complex it is to respond to it in a helpful way.

In that context, the current proposal that we are trying to work through relative to the sharing of commercial and industrial assessment, for example, takes that into account. We try for an equitable result as opposed to an equal result.

I think most people accept that argument but might say, "Although that is true in theory, so to speak, nevertheless the best index we have for equity is equality, so send more money," or something of that sort.

I think we have made a number of moves in this direction in the last couple of years. The change in the equalization factors, the raising of the ceilings, the proposals coming forward relative to sharing commercial and industrial assessment will all create more equitable distribution of the province's resources. But I think we have to face one essential fact relative to this issue, and that is, as long as we depend as much as we do on the property tax for the support of local school boards, there are going to be vast differences in the resources available to those boards across the province.

The extremes are very great in this particular province. I do not know quite what it is, but I am sure if we went from the richest to the poorest board, we would have something like six or seven times the available resources for local school boards facing what are at least similar groups of children. They are not the same and they are not the same amounts. That is quite unusual in this country. It is the price one pays for relying on both the property tax and local control at the same time.

There are ways of dealing with it. There are options available that could be considered by the committee. For example, we could limit access to the local tax base—that is one possibility—so that no matter how rich you were in theory, you would not be that rich in fact. This is what Quebec does, for example. We could centralize the whole system very dramatically and collect all the commercial and industrial assessment ourselves. That is what British Columbia does, just as another example. There are lots of examples of these. You do not have to look far to find them.

You could vastly increase the size of the general legislative grant, which is an issue on which I do not want to make a serious comment, to be quite frank, since that is not an issue that is the deputy minister's to deal with. You might want to speak to the minister on that matter.

1040

The difficulty faced is not that we do not have a redistributive mechanism. The GLG is essentially the redistributive mechanism we have. The difficulty, of course, is the difference between the approved ceilings and the actual costs that school boards either choose to or have to experience, depending on whom you are asking about that question. So that remains, I think, an unresolved issue.

When we finish with the equalization factors and the sharing proposals and we take the next step relative to ceilings, we will have ameliorated that to some extent, but we will not have changed the basic underlying problem that will persist into the future.

In terms of adequacy, which perhaps raises the question of the level of the GLG, there is no easy way for me to tell you or for you to hear from anyone else precisely the number there is out there about which you could say, "This is adequate, less is inadequate and more is unnecessary." There is no such number. No one knows quite what that would be. What we do know is that the amount of money school boards spend does not seem dramatically related to the outcomes they achieve, at least as we can measure them, which is a limitation, I have to admit. We do know that no matter how much we spend, it would not be perceived as adequate.

I think that is for quite a good reason and really quite a happy reason in a way. Schools as institutions properly see themselves as in business to spend every cent they have to achieve good ends, and if there are more cents, there will be more sense and we will do more good things. I mean that in a quite positive way. That is the function of that kind of social institution. Schools are not in the business to save money and build up bank accounts; schools are in the business to educate the public with the resources that are provided by that same public for that same purpose. I think they should because there is not a school board in this province that has achieved its objectives fully. So if they have more resources, they should be busy fulfilling more of those objectives that they themselves set up.

Adequacy is difficult to measure, especially in the context we face in education, which is that we are always thinking of new things for schools to

do as social problems emerge, as they do. It is not a figment of people's imagination that social problems emerge. We keep saying: "Why do we not solve this in the schools? That is where we have young people. They are all there, more or less. Why do we not teach them more about this or more about that or more about something else?"

As I said a little earlier, we are now reaching the stage in the province where the system of finance will force us, if nothing else forces us—other things should do, but if nothing else does—to make choices. We must choose what it is we want the schools to produce for us and what it is we are going to have other social agencies do. The alternative is to co-opt more people and more institutions into the work of the schools, which is another interesting alternative. We must ask ourselves what labour, what business, what other social agencies have to offer the schools that might enable them to achieve some of these objectives in a way that would be consistent with public policy.

In a way, the use of the schools is irresistible. We do not have many other agencies to use. We have the shopping mall and the television set, but as common acculturation experiences, that is it other than the schools. So the attraction of being able to use what is and should be a publicly responsive institution to achieve publicly determined objectives is in a way just irresistible. It is just too good to resist. But I think we do have to resist it or at least use it selectively. Otherwise, no system of finance is going to produce anything but disaster.

Finally, I think I should say something about two sources of finance which I do not know whether you have an interest in, but which are important in terms of the government's overall contribution to the elementary and secondary schools. One is capital and the other is teacher pensions. Let me say just a little bit about each of them.

In the capital case, of course, we have experienced two things at the same time in the past few years. One is a huge increase in actual government expenditure and the other is at least a proportionate increase, if not even a greater increase, in the desire for capital expenditure on behalf of the local school boards. When you take those ratios, you seem to be standing still. You feel like you are running in place in the sense that you are spending a lot more, not only of money but of energy and time, but you are not satisfying a greater proportion of the requests.

Those two things are related in my view; that is, the more you spend, the more requests you generate simply because there is a sense that there is money about and for the reasons I have said before, there are always good things to spend it on.

I mean that in quite a positive way. I do not mean that people are trying to squander the public purse or anything like that. People will have their own views about the standards people use for school construction, for example. Nevertheless, I do not think that is what is happening. I do not think that is the psychology of it. In my view, the psychology of it is: "The government's spending more money. Let's think of things we perhaps did not think about before that we can use beneficially for the students or for the local community." I do not regard it as at all venal, but I think it is a fact that the sheer amount of the money does create a sense of need that otherwise would not be present.

As I suggested before, the need arises not so much from an increase in enrolment—there is a small increase in enrolment going on and will be for the next several years—but just a displacement of students. They are just in different places, so you need the spaces in different places than you had them before.

I am not of the view that we are facing a crisis in this area in the province. I spend about a day a week visiting schools during the regular school year, and although there are lots of portables at lots of schools, I do not regard that as an absolute disaster for the future of young people. I do not regard it as appropriate either. I would like them to be in regular buildings and we have to move to reduce that dependency in the large urban areas, but to use it as an excuse for not delivering the goods is simply a hopeless argument, from my point of view. I see too many wonderful things happening in some of those classrooms.

What I am hoping we will be able to do is gradually reduce the portable stock—I am not proud of it; I do not like to see them lined up like railroad cars on school property—and increase the range of options available to the local school boards in trying to raise money for capital expenditure so they are not entirely dependent on the particular operating budget of the ministry.

On the teacher pension issue, I do not want to use this occasion to examine the arguments for and against the legislation that has been introduced. There are other contexts for that. There will be committee hearings and I do not want to get into that particular argument at the moment, but I do want to say that I attach a great deal of

importance to the resolution of that problem as part of the basis of our financial structure for education.

Unless we make sure that the future pensions are secure, we will not only be misleading ourselves about the costs of education in the province; we will also be misleading the teachers, who have every right to expect that what is held out as a promise will in fact be delivered at the other end. I feel some sort of moral obligation as well as a financial obligation to have that matter resolved. The Legislature will choose the method of resolution, but I think it is important that it be done and be put behind us so that it can take its regular part as one of the building blocks of the education finance system.

I am glad to say, simply in my capacity as deputy minister, two other things. Well, one of them I am glad to say, one I am perhaps sorry to say.

The one I perhaps am sorry to say—I will take that one first—is that I have deliberately avoided, as you may or may not have noticed, raising the issue of the funding of private schools in my own comments. I do not intend to discuss it either, but I think I have to at least explain why I have left it out.

It is not because I think it is an unimportant issue or a trivial issue and it is not that I, acting in my capacity as a private citizen, have changed my mind since the publication of the report that I myself wrote in 1984 or 1985—I forget which year; I think 1984—but I did adopt a policy when I came to work for the Ontario public service.

The conflict of interest was just too extreme, having written the report and now being in the position of presumably trying to advise the government on whether or not to implement it and things of that sort. I felt the conflict was difficult and I therefore adopted the policy and have stuck to it for the past three and a half years of not talking in public about private schools; leaving that entirely for the minister to deal with in terms of a public comment. So I am sorry. I know it is not unreasonable to ask me questions of that sort, but I will not be able to respond to them.

One of the things I am glad to say, as opposed to sorry to say, is that there are a lot of unresolved problems in education finance, which is part of why I have found it so much fun working for the Ontario public service.

1050

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Dr Shapiro. Yesterday, Mr Trbovich did an excellent job of guiding us through some of the

technical intricacies and today you have very successfully reduced that to some human, manageable terms. It certainly is not easy with such a complex subject as education financing to reduce it to simplicity. I congratulate you on your presentation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We do not consider you inhuman; not yet.

Mr Jackson: That was very human.

Mr Mahoney: It was good of you to tell us what we cannot ask you about too.

The Chairman: That is right. I am glad you set those terms.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just think we should go in camera and take a load off his shoulders.

The Chairman: The other thing I am personally grateful for is you have given me some justification as a Metro member as to why the Metro board has a much greater expenditure per pupil than elsewhere across the province, other than the fact that we have more money. I now know the difference between equity and equality, so while we may not have achieved equality in the more money we spend in Metro, at least there is a measure of equity because of the complexity and the heterogeneous population we have to work with. You have now given me new life, new hope.

We have a number of members who have indicated an interest in asking a question of Dr Shapiro. We will start with Mr Kozyra and then go on to Mr Johnston.

Mr Kozyra: I have four questions and they relate somewhat to the financing aspect, but they certainly relate to things you said.

First, several weeks ago, Prime Minister Mulroney had some musings on education and I am wondering if it is too early to say how the province might feel affected by what was indicated as the federal government's greater interest in education. How might that affect Ontario, financially, I guess, and in other areas.

Dr Shapiro: I think it is unlikely to have any effect on Ontario at all financially. I do not think this was an attempt by the Prime Minister to indicate that he was suddenly going to try to endow the provinces with large new resources with which to deal with the problem he identifies. I do not think that it is going to have any effect financially. I think its immediate effect substantively is likely to be that it will show up as an item on the first ministers' conference agenda in, I think, early November; I forget exactly when it is scheduled, some time in November in Ottawa. It will likely be an item on that agenda. If it is, what

I would advise the minister is not to get into a verbal contest of words over whether the system is or is not working, and how much and who is responsible and stuff like that because that is just not going to get anybody anywhere.

I think what we might do is approach the federal government and say: "Okay, so look, these are our principles, these are our objectives. Let's try and achieve them together. If you have an interest, let's move forward." I do not see any point in trying to just have an exchange of views like: "Yes, you are responsible." "No, you are not."

Mr Kozyra: A couple of months ago, I watched an American documentary that did a comparison of schooling in the US and Japan, their approach to it. I am just wondering whether we have some information on the relative amount of money that is spent, say, in our system per pupil as opposed to both of those? In that, there was a vast disparity between the approaches. One was very much socially oriented, that in the US, as opposed to the other being very much academically driven. I wonder whether we are in the centre of it. When I was a teacher, there used to be the kind of comment or criticism that Canada was about five years behind the US in a sense, that we would pick up whatever was happening there five years later, that kind of thing. Or are we now in the international sphere, picking the best from all that there is out there in the entire world?

Dr Shapiro: Let me say a couple of things. First of all, I do not know what the relative costs of education are in Japan so I simply cannot answer that question. I would be glad to find out for the committee if you would like to know, but I do not know myself. I think comparisons with Japan, although useful because they help us understand something about where we are at least in terms of academic achievement, and therefore I have been in favour of the ministry participating in all the international studies that are going on—if there is one going on, we join it just to get that information, but I think you have to be very careful in making easy transfers between another jurisdiction and your own when it is that different.

Japan, socially, has entirely different culture than the culture in Canada. It is not a multicultural environment and has no interest in becoming one. Neither, in my view, is it a democratic environment in the way we understand it. I do not mean this as a slur on the Japanese government. It is just an entirely different sense of authority and of individual freedom to choose than exists in

this particular province. We cannot simply adapt methods they might use and expect the same results or the same acceptance. However, we do have to compete in the same international marketplace irrespective of all that, so I would say that what we attempt to do is to ask ourselves, "What can we learn from that that would be appropriate to us?"

It seems to me we could learn at least two things. The first is that it helps when you focus the mind, when you decide what is going to be done and what is not going to be done, because then you can focus your energy and your resources on achieving a narrower range of objectives. The second is that I think we have some distance to go in engaging the work of young people in the school system. I think the possibility, for example, of simply more schooling—I do not mean more years of schooling but more use of the classroom, sometimes longer school days and more differentiated school years—is the kind of thing we could easily think through.

They are not cheap, incidentally. They are all expensive, but that does not mean they are not worth doing; it just means we should not think they are free. I think those are options we might well adapt to use in some sense.

I do not think that in educational terms we are following the United States at five-year intervals. If anything, I think the reverse is true. I think that with respect to the situation we described in terms of differences between resources available to districts, probably the only place in the world where it is more extreme than it is in Ontario is in the United States. Just to take an example that someone was quoting to me this morning, there are 62 different school boards in Westchester county, I think it was. This is the county immediately north of New York City. The variation is everything from \$1,700 a pupil to \$7,700 a pupil in terms of what is available to the communities, which are literally next door to each other, within blocks of each other. In that way, the Americans are one example of a greater extreme. We are great in our context but not in that one.

Mr Kozyra: My next question is about substantive accountability. You mentioned it and I guess this was in relation to the province-wide tests and the changes that go back. I was a product of that provincial examination and as a survivor I tend to look back with some fondness to it and find out the situation—

Dr Shapiro: You really have to ask somebody else about that.

Mr Kozyra: The year in which I graduated, 1960, from high school in a moderate-sized high school, there was one Ontario scholar. That same high school this year, I think, had something like 20 with the graduating class not much larger. I wonder whether in the changes that are being proposed, the OAC exams and so on, that is one of the concerns that is being addressed because of the percentages the people are graduating with; some of them are 99.8 per cent and so on.

Dr Shapiro: There clearly has been some inflation of the grades in Ontario. There is no doubt about that; there has been. It is not a great concern of mine, to be quite frank; that is, I am not worried about the fact that there are more people we are willing to be good to than there were before. In fact, I might look to try and increase that group altogether since I am very concerned about motivation of students.

The real issue is not whether there has been a rise in the internal grading standards of the province, which is just a relative issue anyway. The real issue is whether, compared to what you actually achieved, there is a rise or a fall in the standard.

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I think the problem in Ontario can be put this way: All the evidence we have suggests that the standards are not falling. In fact, they tend to be rising a little bit. The problem is that they are not rising quickly enough. The problem is not with the relative grading standard; the problem is with the absolute achievement level. There we have to work on trying to get that to rise more quickly than in fact it has.

With the OAC program that you referred to, we have tried something quite different. We have now gone through two cycles and we have had one considerable success and one disappointment. We will just have to work with both of those to try to make them both successes.

The success was in English, where we wrote a program that was very much more prescriptive than it had been previously. We had all kinds of workshops for teachers, etc. When we did the examination of the teachers' practices, we found that they were implementing the program as described and that people in universities who were receiving the students were noticing the difference in their achievement. So it seemed a success.

We have just gone through, and are about to release in the not-too-distant future, the visual arts program on the same basis. There we are finding something quite different; that is, we are finding that teachers are not implementing the

program. We will have an accountability question to deal with, but that is the purpose of doing this kind of work. You at least know. You do not have to guess whether things are happening or not happening, and you have some way of going back to teachers and saying, "Look at what is wrong."

There are two reasons for not implementing a program. One is that you have made the correct judgement that it is a terrible program, and why visit it on the pupil? The other is: "You are just not doing what you should be doing. Get on with your job." We have to work with teachers and school boards to try and figure out how best to deal with it.

My sense of it is that, by and large, the professional educators in Ontario want good things to happen to students and are therefore quite responsive to the ministry's trying out a differentiated program that seems appropriate to the context. At the OAC it will be much more prescriptive so that we can ensure that standards are relatively common for university entrance. At other levels we hope to leave more options open to local boards.

Mr Kozyra: The last question has to do with the continuing shift of the educational burden from provincial to municipal funding. I put it in the context that 20 years ago a group of Thunder Bay teachers toured some American schools in Wisconsin. One of the situations we found there was considerable municipal funding. The ratio was very high. They would have their annual elections and vote on specific school items.

The one case in point that struck me was funding on an auditorium that had been voted on two years previously. They built the auditorium, but when it came time to vote on the funding for the seats for the auditorium, they reneged for three or four years, so the building was left relatively useless. That was seen as a direct result of this kind of very strong shift in involvement of municipal funding.

I wonder whether you see that as a kind of threat down the road. At what point do we get concerned about those kinds of things?

Dr Shapiro: To elect trustees at the local level is to announce that you have confidence in the democratic process at that level. If it turns out to be irresponsible, that is a problem of political philosophy and not a problem in educational finance. Nevertheless, I accept the point that the more we depend on local levels of funding, the more variable the response is likely to be out there and the harder it will be to implement

provincial policy, whatever the constitutional prerogatives are.

I suppose it is easier to wield a big stick when you are carrying a big bag at the same time. That is an issue that we are going to have to deal with. It is not only a question of the difference between the provincial share and the municipal share but also a question of the relationship between the municipal council and the school board.

As we think about educational finance, I would love to think of a way of joining together on a more co-operative basis the local school board with the local municipal council so that as they think about local resources and local problems, they could go forward together. As it is, they tend to carpet each other more than a little and, in a sense, inadvertently poison the environment for local municipal politics.

At one time, about a year or two ago, I explored the possibility of whether it would be possible in Ontario to bring into closer connection the municipal councils and the school boards, just to deal with overall issues of public finance at the local level. It turns out to be ultra vires under the Canadian Constitution, simply because the guarantee to the Roman Catholic separate school boards requires that they be entirely separate from other kinds of local political arrangements.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I always enjoy it when you wax philosophical. I remember another occasion before this committee when you came to the rescue of the minister of the time, who did not seem to be able to deal with philosophy at all. I enjoyed that exchange as much as I have this morning.

Some of the things I would like to talk about are going to end up in questions and some of them just may be comments I would like you to respond to. There are so many different issues that you have raised it is difficult to know exactly where to start, but why do I not start with the area that has always been my preoccupation?

You talked about the fortunate fifth. I agree with you that that assumption has been out there and it is necessary to change, but what we have never had much discussion about in Ontario is the unfortunate fifth and what the education system has not done for those people. I guess it is actually bigger than a fifth when you look at it, if you start to look not just at socioeconomically deprived groups but at Franco-Ontarians and what they have been able to expect from the education system in comparison with English-speaking Ontarians, long before multiculturalism, when there were just the two nations. Then

somewhere in the middle you have the other three fifths, which I think in general are doing better today in the education system than they were in the past.

When I look at your notion of the social goal and the multicultural emphasis you put on it, I think that is important. Obviously, I agree with your comments on it strongly in terms of seeing some major changes in resources. I wish I could say that I saw that in terms of what has happened in heritage language, for instance, or the kind of action we have seen on racism and that sort of thing.

I will leave all of that aside at the moment and instead dwell on the notion that it goes back to the recommendation made by this committee in its first report around changing the preamble to the goals of education to explicitly reflect collectivist social goals for the education system.

I wonder if there has been anything take place on that and whether you have any comments around the nature of that long-standing failure of the education system to deal with or to have some major impact on the socioeconomic indicators and certain other things, like the Indian population or the Franco-Ontarian population, in terms of its success or lack of success.

Dr Shapiro: I really do not have much of a comment. I have a specific comment on the recommendation of the committee that I am glad to share with you. The reason we have not responded, in a sense, proactively relative to that is not that we have any problem with the actual recommendation, which seems to us quite reasonable, in fact appropriate, but that we have some problem with the entire statement of goals that the province currently has for its education system and we want to work on that. When we complete that work, we will presumably include in it the kind of statement that you referred to in the committee's recommendations, because we have no problem with the actual recommendation.

My sense of the question of the responsibility and the efficacy of the school system in responding to the least fortunate—I used fifth simply because it started with “f” and it rhymed with fortunate, that is all. It was not meant to be any kind of sociological statement of a specific sort.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is pretty accurate.

Dr Shapiro: That is right, yes. But I think that it really does relate to the comment I made; that is, relative to previous generations, the efforts by school boards relative to most groups that we might regard as, say, part of the unfortunate fifth,

just for lack of a better term, I think are quite considerable. They have not, however, yielded the differential result that one might have hoped would occur. I think the reason for that is that the schools alone cannot accomplish that task. That problem is so much more deeply embedded in the social environment in which we exist that many other things have to change at the same time.

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It is not simply a question of spending more money on schools, although that presumably would help in those communities where there are a large number of people who in relative terms are unfortunate. That would be useful and probably would achieve some marginal result, but I do not believe that would do it by itself. Lyndon Johnson, I guess, used to talk about the war on poverty. Whether he believed it or one thought he was doing the right thing or anything of that sort is another question. That is the scale that we are talking about, the scale that that language implies. I am not trying to describe the actual program he was relating to. It really needs to be very much more dramatic and comprehensive.

I am encouraged in some respects. As you probably know, in another capacity I have some new responsibilities relative to the Ministry of Skills Development. I spent a day there yesterday talking about the agreement with the federal government on various training funds, etc, that the ministry negotiates on behalf of Ontario. We tried to explore the notion of putting together the agreement on training with the agreement on income support, rather than having two separate agreements.

That is the kind of thing that begins to make sense. Whether that particular idea will work or is sensible we do not know, as we do not know enough about it to tell you, but it is the kind of thing that makes sense because, if you are not going to attack this problem of the difficulties people face all along the line, your efforts simply are going to dissipate.

There will be some advantage. It is not totally wasted, and I do not want to suggest that but I do not think we can expect that the schools as institutions by themselves will be able to accomplish that job, no matter how we finance them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not think anybody does. I disagree, though, with the notion that there has been a major emphasis on this. I would suggest that if there had been a real emphasis on this, there would have been some data collection on some of the work that was done in this field.

There has been virtually nothing. Most of the boards we have talked to in the past collect no socioeconomic data.

Dr Shapiro: No. It is true.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So how the heck can you determine that. I do not think that is the focus, frankly.

Dr Shapiro: Let me put it another way. I would not entirely agree with you. I think it is not necessary to collect socioeconomic data to know a lot about the children facing you in the classroom. However, if you were really serious about the effects of programs, it would be necessary to collect data on what you did and what happened, which has not occurred. I agree with you on that ground.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. If you do not even know which kids are not attending kindergarten on a regular basis, knowing that absenteeism is going to be a real indicator of the child at risk, you really start to wonder what sort of focus there is in the system on it.

I continually find that in the language that is being used—yes, we take the easy multicultural route in terms of our rhetoric these days—we still really do not seem to want to direct ourselves to whom it is the education system has failed.

The Chairman: Mr Johnston, I think Mr Jackson had a supplementary. Do you prefer to finish your line of questioning?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am going to go on to some other things. I know he wants to come back to what it is the ministry is concerned about in terms of goals. I will leave that open to him because he had another motion in that area.

Mr Jackson: He knows my concerns.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do want to come back to a couple of the other matters, such as the accountability question. I do not disagree with your analysis of the various levels. From my perspective, what is important about accountability is the democratic accountability here in terms of a citizen trying to get not just information about the system, but some sense of ownership of the system.

It ties in very nicely with the extra category you put in as simplification, because I just do not see at the moment in our present system how any electorate—take Metropolitan Toronto as an example—is supposed to know where to turn in terms of its sense of where the system is going at that point. Forget the individual child, although I am not sure exactly how you extricate the individual from the general, as you did.

How do you go to the Metropolitan Toronto School Board when it is indirectly elected? When do you know that it is your local board that is not doing something that another board is actually doing in Metro? When do you know it is the ministry's fault? As in the example I was using with the expectation for senior kindergarten, there is enormous expectation out there but no capital money is going to be put out there. So there is going to be a real difference of approach to it, depending on the boards' problems in the province.

In terms of that fundamental accountability not just to the professionals in the system—I agree with that new generation of community builders that we need in the professions—but on the notion of just where the buck does stop, whether it is programmatic or in terms of capital or whatever, it is virtually impossible for the average elector to know where to turn these days.

The reason they do not participate in the school board elections, in my view, is that they do not have a clear idea of what they are actually electing. If they thought they could stop the building of an auditorium and save a little bit of the burden on their property taxes, they would probably love that and go roaring off and do it. But in a general sense, they have no sense of ownership in the system.

Dr Shapiro: I guess I would say that I do not quite agree with you because on that analysis, there would be large turnouts in small communities where that is easy and small turnouts in large communities where it is difficult. That is not what happens. So I think you are probably partly right, but not entirely right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is not even easy in a small community. Take a small community that is 90 per cent funded by the province. Why bother going out to your local school board?

Dr Shapiro: I understand, but most communities are neither large nor small in the extreme sense that you are talking about, or poor; small communities are not necessarily poor communities. Nevertheless, I do accept the fact that access in that sense, what I call access accountability and you call democratic accountability, can be an issue.

On the other hand, I think if you are going to raise that issue, you have to deal with the real complexities of it because I do not think, for example, that the double-tier system, which makes things even more complicated than they might otherwise be, was invented as a way of obfuscating the general public. It was invented as a way, at least as far as I can tell, of providing

greater equity in a certain area when it was not possible to redefine the area politically. I do not mean political in the sense of a party, but it was not possible to eliminate a place called Toronto, another place called East York and another place called North York, etc, just because it seemed more simple to do so.

In any system we develop, we have to take some of those complexities into account without giving up on the issue because I think the issue is a fair issue to raise; it is a real problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other one I raised with the inhumane Trbovich yesterday was this question of the province just standing back and determining what the relative wealth of various communities was and therefore what burden they could withstand under the ceilings, or over the ceilings at the moment. Yet at the same time as the province has presumably been determining year after year that there is more and more wealth out there municipally, the province has been lowering its level, as you say, from 61 per cent back in 1975 to 45 per cent now, and presumably determining that we have less wealth at the provincial level in terms of the money that should be going into education—at the same time, as we know, that the coffers have been expanding to even \$1 billion a year over what the Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon) expects.

I am wondering how we put that together in terms of a notion of where the onus should be in the system when the control is in the province's hands in determining the relative wealth and then making that political judgement, rather than having any kind of really negotiated approach on it.

Dr Shapiro: I am just going to say two things. One is that I think it is true that the province's tax base has been expanding, but it is also true that in most communities the local tax base has been expanding, in some cases very rapidly and in other cases not. The only other comment I want to make is that if asked by the Treasurer, I will not object to an increase in the general legislative grant.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought you might say that, and we are delighted that you are there to get rid of the Ministry of Skills Development. I am just wonderfully pleased that you are doing that.

There is one final thing I want to raise. The other day a retiring director of education, who must go unnamed—

Mr Jackson: It is not Dickie Dodds, is it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Dickie Dodds and I do not speak a great deal.

He said something to me which concerned me, and it comes back to your notion of the audit-style accountability. He said that if there was one major concern he had in leaving the directorship of this very large school board, it was that he more and more saw his bureaucracy developing to feed his bureaucracy, rather than to provide direct service at the moment.

Looking at the system as an outsider and seeing how it is the historical change from well over a thousand school boards down to what we have at the moment, and the two-tier system, etc, one starts to wonder whether there should not be another analysis not only in terms of the accessibility argument but also in terms of the financial accountability for bucks as to just whether the bureaucracies are feeding upon each other or whether they are necessary.

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Dr Shapiro: First of all, I think proposition analysis would be a good thing to do because the question keeps coming up. Since at least at the provincial level we do not have good data, any significant data on that matter, it would probably be a good idea to get it so that we can deal with the problem in a more straightforward way. I need to also say, however, that the more that we develop in terms of kinds of objectives that we expect the school to achieve and the more that we respond, let's say, to the Provincial Auditor wanting to know whether it has been achieved, the more we need somebody out there to go out and do the work of telling us whether it has been and in a sense create exactly the problem you are describing which is a bureaucracy designed to serve another part of the bureaucracy rather than to offer direct service.

So it requires two things. First, I think the data collection would be a good idea and maybe we ought to try to see whether we can do that. Second, I think it requires a certain discipline on the part of everybody not to keep telling people to only offer direct service at the same time as you keep telling them to tell you about themselves.

I often say, since I have had my first professional experience in education as a sort of evaluation expert type, that the greatest danger in assessment is that you will spend all your time evaluating what you are doing instead of doing what you are doing. Making sure that you keep the appropriate balance turns out to be important.

The Chairman: Just before we go on to Mr Mahoney, Mr Keyes and Mr Jackson, I have a question of my own. I want to tie together—

Mr Mahoney: I move that the chair be heard.

The Chairman: What can I say? I want to tie together two comments you made. One was the reference to the fact that the schools cannot accomplish it alone if they are trying to do something for the students who do not fit into this fortunate fifth category. I would assume from that comment you were referring to the broader society in general but also the community and the parental responsibility. Then you and Mr Johnston were talking about the accessibility part of the accountability, or what he called the democratic bit.

As a ministry, I am sure you are looking at the Chicago situation and the fairly dramatic proposals that are being undertaken down there with respect to community representation and in fact community control of the education system. Do you ever see us going maybe not in that extreme a direction in Ontario but at least along that route where the parents are given this type of responsibility?

Dr Shapiro: I think that the more radical experiments of this sort—Chicago is one and New York has been through it several different times and several different versions—have all been failures. That is not to say that a future one will not be successful. The ones that have been tried have been failures. I think the reason they have been failures is that they have been, in a sense, simply too radical to make sense.

I think the kinds of things we might explore are at least two. One is a greater encouragement of what I would call alternative schools inside the public school system, because these tend to arise in combinations of teachers and parents who develop ideas that might be interesting. When you talk about alternative schools, people always seem to think in terms of the pedagogy of joy and the far left, etc, but that is something left over from the 1960s. The alternative schools being developed actively now in a whole wide variety of jurisdictions tend to be far more alternatives to the right, as it turns out, and you provide an opportunity for people to express themselves and have much more direct access to the system. I think that would be helpful.

Another approach that might be worth considering is trying to provide a more active framework and perhaps a more substantial legal or legislative framework for participation of parents at the local level without going to the kinds of what I consider to be self-defeating extremes that I see both in New York and in Chicago. I think that might be well worth considering in trying to work through at least some initial phases.

The Chairman: Yes, I would certainly welcome that direction. I agree with you as far as the radical proposal that Chicago has developed is concerned, but I still think that there needs to be a mechanism in the school system to allow parents not only to have accessibility—as you have pointed out, that is not the problem. The problem is when they get there, is anybody listening? You can have the meeting, but if there is a—

Dr Shapiro: No, I understand.

The Chairman: —predisposed end to the meeting before it is begun, then it does not do the parent much good. I would very much welcome any kind of parental participation at that level.

Mr Mahoney: I would like to deal with the comments you made about the relationship between the councils and the school boards, the trustees and the municipal politicians, the funding, the ability to raise the money. Just to tell you, in my own community the 60 per cent, of course, of the budget of the total tax dollar goes to education, 15 per cent to the region and 25 per cent to the city. Yet it is the city that takes all the heat when it comes time to levy the tax increase because, of course, it is the tax collector.

In one instance, we actually went to the extreme of printing the school board's portion of the levy in red, bright red fluorescent, on the tax bill to try to draw to the attention of the ratepayer—

Mr Jackson: Teachers usually de-elect guys like you.

Mr Mahoney: I did not hear what he said but it does not matter.

Mr Jackson: The OSSTF has all this on record.

Mr Mahoney: —the issue of how you bring someone together when in fact one body of elected officials gets the right to simply hand the bill to the other body of elected officials, without any accountability to that body whatsoever. In fact, I can remember going in a delegation to the board of education, years ago—not with the current chair and many of the people on that board because I think the situation has improved—but I can remember council actually appearing as a delegation and being told to sit there and be quiet—if you can imagine telling Hazel to do that—until it was time for us to have our opportunity to address their holinesses.

Frankly, the atmosphere was just absolutely maddening. I do not know if you have any suggestions. We have toyed with separate tax bills. When you recognize that in many commu-

nities, I am sure in the GTA area in many areas, the job of—

Mr R. F. Johnston: The what area?

Mr Mahoney: The greater tax area. Is that not what you call it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is right.

Mr Mahoney: The job of a trustee has become much more full-time—at least many of them are defining it as such, as being full-time—and, frankly, much more political, I think, than it used to be. So you have a politician elected in a full-time capacity in many instances making at least close to full-time wages—not all, but in many—but having no accountability for the bill that he submits. It is not surprising at all that the taxpayer or the parent does not know to go and stop the example that Taras used. By the way, Taras, I started high school in 1960 when you graduated, but anyway; and eight years later, I got out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: And he was a precocious student.

Mr Jackson: He did not have a seat either. He was always in a corner.

Mr Mahoney: Having sort of laid that one on you, I was wondering if you have any wisdom as to how we indeed solve that problem.

Dr Shapiro: The short answer to that is no. I do not have any wisdom to offer on the subject. I do not think the notion of having the school board issue, in a sense, its own bill and collect its own taxes is altogether a bad idea. It sounds administratively inefficient, but it might be a good idea for other reasons because it does help focus the responsibility for the money that is being collected.

I have toyed but I have not done much, I must admit, with the notion of, since I found out that actually connecting the two was ultra vires to the Constitution, at least trying to get the two together on a more systematic basis, to say, "Look, it is all right, but we won't let you levy new taxes unless you have at least had a consultation with the council and create a context in which you would at least have to talk to each other, however much you would find it inconvenient or inappropriate," just to try to create better feeling between the two local levels of government. I find less than wild enthusiasm attends that suggestion, but it is a possibility you might consider. I really do not have any wisdom to offer you.

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Mr Mahoney: That is a little bit the way the police commissions operate, I think.

Dr Shapiro: Exactly.

Mr Mahoney: Even though they can simply hand the bill over to the regional municipality or their funding authority, I think they do tend in most communities at least to talk and pretend that they are asking for approval, if nothing else.

Dr Shapiro: In some communities that happens with schools and councils as well, but there are a lot where it does not.

Mr Mahoney: I came in a little bit after you had started and you started to discuss income tax versus property tax. Could you tell me your preference on that?

Dr Shapiro: No.

Mr Mahoney: Thank you.

Mr Jackson: He is making more than us, Steve.

Dr Shapiro: I did not discuss the relative value of these. The only point I was making was that in the long run you cannot discuss education finance independent of all the other tax and fiscal structures of the province, that these are related to each other. The decision, for example, to use or to not use the property tax has enormous effect on municipal finance or on other provincial government programs or how you are going to deal with the income tax, for example, or the sales tax or any other taxing structure you have. All I meant was that in the long run you really have to consider basic issues about the structure of fund-raising for the province and not just focus on a subset.

Mr Mahoney: I will pass to the next speaker.

The Chairman: This may be a leading question, but has there been any suggestion that one of these three experts in the Ministry of Education who actually understands how the system works might get together with Revenue and with the Treasury and Municipal Affairs and try to see whether something could be worked out?

Dr Shapiro: Some of those discussions have in fact taken place, I have to say, in fairness to Mr Trbovich and his colleagues in Municipal Affairs and Revenue and Treasury. A lot of those kinds of discussions actually go on on a relatively continuing basis, but I think that—

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is impossible to find solutions.

Dr Shapiro: No, it is not a question of that. It is not a question of its being impossible to find solutions, but I think those are not questions appropriately dealt with by the Ontario public service, which can lay out various options and

think through various alternatives. Those are questions that the government needs to deal with on a much more basic level. That is not something that you would reflect in a little cabinet submission; it is something of a major government policy development that would have to take place.

Mr Mahoney: Could I just follow up? Would you agree that we have to do some form of radical surgery if in fact we are going to solve the accountability problem that Richard brings up all the time in the sense of getting people to understand that 60 per cent or 50 per cent or whatever per cent of their tax dollar is spent by those trustees that they never ask any questions of at the all-candidates meetings? Are we going to have to really change the way money is raised by the school boards or educate people or do something of a fairly radical nature?

Dr Shapiro: I do not actually think you would have to do radical things to accomplish that objective. I think some objectives you would need radical measures for, but I do not think that is one of them. For example, you yourself said you played around with the notion of issuing separate tax bills. That is not a very radical measure, but it would certainly accomplish some of the objectives you seem to have in mind.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But it does not tell them, again, coming out of programmatic accountability, which has to be tied to this, what it is that is funding what. It all goes into one pot and the poor and—

Dr Shapiro: It seems to me that is an issue for the responsibility of the local trustees. If people really do care about the fact that 60 per cent of the bill is going to education, if they really do—I mean other than on the day they pay us—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have several letters here, just this morning.

Dr Shapiro: We got several letters as well, but to really care you have not only to write a letter but to do something about it now the letter has been written. I think a lot of people really do. I am not questioning whether they do or not, but if they really do, I think that they have a responsibility at election time. That is what it means to be a citizen.

Mr Mahoney: You also made the statement, though, that most people learn from the people employed in the education industry about education.

Dr Shapiro: Not in the ministry, in the schools.

Mr Mahoney: My experience does not concur with that. I have found that as my kids have gone through the system, I have learned each year with them what the problems are from their experiences. This might upset some, but it has almost seemed to me that it was in the interests of the people within the industry, if you want to call it that, to keep this mystique there and keep the parents the hell away. Only the extra pushy parents were the ones who got in there, got the answers, understood and had the time to go and sit in the school. The rest of us, who are busy trying to survive in life, tend to pick it up from the kids.

Mr Furlong: I cannot believe you were laid back.

Mr Mahoney: Sure, schools intimidate me.

The Chairman: I think you can reach a consensus on that one too.

Mr Keyes: Coming back, this really hinges on the same area. I am not really sure how I can phrase the question any better than Steve did, but it is municipal experience coming back through.

I think one of the things that happens in our system—you spoke about the unresolved tension between central and local control. A certain amount of tension in any system, I think, is advisable, but I see the tension between school boards and municipal councils as a fairly strong one, which is not healthy at all for the system. If tension brings about appropriate change in the system, I think it is good, but I see this one that constantly overshadows the goals of the education system.

I am looking at the municipalities in my jurisdiction at the present moment, where in every municipal office of the townships around they have a mammoth petition asking every taxpayer to sign. It is to reduce the education budget of the county by 10 per cent. That, to me, does not foster any great benefit to the education system in that county, that that is the thing every taxpayer who walks into every small municipal township office, and there are 20 of them, is confronted with by the staff of the municipality, to sign this petition so that the school board will get the message, "We want them to reduce their expenditure." Nothing is fruitful from it.

I would hope that one of the biggest things we can do in this committee is perhaps look at that for some time as to the type of recommendations that could be made to deal with that issue, because as an example, that was more of an interest, I am afraid to say, in some of the municipal offices than to try to get a presentation

made by them collectively to this committee next Monday in Kingston.

I feel that we may be making a little bit light of it and not taking it seriously enough. This whole method of how school boards become more accountable to the taxpayer through the collection of their dollars is an important one. If you people within the ministry and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs have not wrestled with it, maybe we ought to be giving some direction in that regard, or at least have in this committee a real discussion on it.

Dr Shapiro: Certainly since I had no particular wisdom to offer to Mr Mahoney, any wisdom you can offer us, and I mean this seriously, would really be helpful. I recognize the problem as something that needs to be dealt with.

Mr Keyes: As I say, tension is good if it brings about something positive, but if it is only kept on the negative side and overshadows what they are trying to do, then it has not achieved much.

I was wondering, then, following from that, as you have looked at the comparison of the methods of financing education in the province, and being aware of what you have said, that you cannot look at it in isolation, do you feel there is a need for any dramatic or reasonable shift away from the process we are using, or are you fairly confident that the attempts to use the goals that were enunciated yesterday by a very competent team of people from your staff, that alterations and changes in that regard to try to provide more equity, availability and accessibility of education is the appropriate way to go, rather than a total overhaul?

Dr Shapiro: My answer would be to think about it in a two-phase arrangement. I think the current initiatives we have under way, whether it is equalization factors or the sharing of commercial-industrial assessment or simplification and redesign of the general legislative grant, will take us quite a distance and will suffice for the system in the immediate future, talking of the next four or five years.

I think, however, that in the longer run, when we are talking about somewhere between five and 20 years, let's say, the question of the difference between the resources available to the relatively poor boards and the relatively rich boards will get too large to be supportable, because what seems to be happening, and it is hard to know whether it is going to continue into the future, is that the difference is getting greater. That is, the distribution is pulling out towards both ends. If that continues, then I think we will

need a somewhat more radical approach at that second phase than we have at the moment.

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Mr Keyes: Thank you for that thought. Perhaps it might be a direction in the long term. So you really only look at all your measures as short-term at the moment.

Dr Shapiro: I think so. I think that in the long term one has to think deeply and therefore deal with some of the issues I raised in the first instance.

Mr Jackson: Bernard, it is always wonderful to hear you make presentations. I guess it is about the ninth or 10th one I have enjoyed over the last five years.

Dr Shapiro: It is quite a few.

Mr Jackson: I apologize for being late. My first daughter started her first day of day care, and I would not miss that for the world.

Dr Shapiro: I do not blame you. I would not have missed it either.

Mr Jackson: I anxiously await Hansard to get caught up. Having said that, you did respond to one of Richard's questions when you said you had some concerns about the goals and mentioned the word "review." Could I ask you to expand on that a little bit? What were your areas?

Dr Shapiro: I know exactly what my concerns are. My concerns with the goals are not that I am against any of them. Certainly, if I take the current set and think of them, I cannot think of one where I would say, "This is a silly goal." As I said earlier, I have no difficulties with the goal that the committee itself suggested be added and changed at the beginning. I think that is fine.

What I am concerned about is that I find the language of the goals to be too abstract to be helpful to school districts. They tend to be rhetorical in nature, which is all right. There is nothing wrong with having rhetorical goals, because it gets you sort of psychologically set to think in one direction rather than in another, but I think they have to be accompanied by things that are a very great deal more concrete, so that you give meaning to what is a psychic commitment at the same time. I just find them too high-flown and not helpful to a local board trying to figure out: "What do we do next? How do we try to participate in this system in a way that is helpful?" It is not always very helpful to my own colleagues in the ministry who are trying to figure out how to do program development in a way that would be consistent with these goals. My concern is really to add to them or to supplement them in some way with a gloss, you

might say, that simply is more precise and less abstract.

Mr Jackson: I appreciate that. I could not agree with you more. When I was a trustee, when we reviewed our goals, I tried to get a moral sensitivity to better understand your relationship to your neighbour, a simple but very specific question that would help me in some of the program areas and development. I was told by administration that that was too specific for goals and that you just could not use language like that. We won our case.

There are other examples and that leads me to my next area, which has to do with the unequal position of young females in our school system. It is an area that concerns me greatly, as you know from the hearings on the select committee on education. I want to build on Richard's line of questioning. I share some support with his line of questioning, where your interest is in multiculturalism, but within that subset I am concerned about young girls and the unequal assumptions that are being made in our systems about their achievement and program access. I would like to hear from you in some more specific terms what we might anticipate from the ministry in terms of some future plans.

I do not want to hear about pay equity and employment equity. I am aware of the efforts in that area by administration. I am talking about classroom program, significant changes and changes that are far-reaching. We are told we need more school land, which is something we talked about; school boards are asking for more land because we need football fields. When you figure that two, three or four per cent of the student body uses that football field for those kinds of dollars and what we could do with them—I do not want to go off on a tangent, but you know it is a very broad subject, and I am looking for some clear thought and direction from the ministry.

Dr Shapiro: I am not sure I can provide that, but I will do the best I can. There are two things I could say first, which do not answer your question; I will get to the question in a minute.

One is that I used multiculturalism not because I thought it was in some sense more relevant than the socioeconomic issue or more relevant than the gender issue. I just used it as an example to express the heterogeneity of concern we have in Ontario about more different kinds of people than we used to have.

Mr Jackson: I am sorry to interrupt you, but you would agree with me that that agenda seems to be overlapping concerns in our schools?

Dr Shapiro: Yes, I would. I think that is true.

Mr Jackson: That concerns me because it is an agenda which is falling, in both Richard's concern area and mine, and I think it is inappropriate.

Dr Shapiro: I think that is a fair point.

The second comment I wanted to make that did not relate directly to the question is that speaking, I have to say, very personally and as a non-football-player—even as a non-football-fan, as a matter of fact—that I have no sympathy for boards that need land for football fields. Unless you need it for some much broader community purpose, which is a different question, then I have absolutely no interest in that, because I regard it as something that is not crucial to the future of the province, and there are other things that are.

Mr Jackson: It is to the medical community.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They are doing all right.

Mrs Cunningham: It is crucial to the enrolment, Dr Shapiro. That is what keeps kids in school. It affects the dropout rate.

Interjections.

Mr Jackson: I knew I would lose control if the chair did not.

The Chairman: The chair is very interested in your comments, because my grade 9 son yesterday made the football team, much over his mother's objections. So if you can ban all football fields before next week when he gets injured, I would very much appreciate it. This is a personal plea.

Mrs Cunningham: I said that once 20 years ago, and you will be sorry you made that statement at your dinner table tonight.

The Chairman: I will not tell him.

Mrs Cunningham: You realize this is the headline for the meeting, Dr Shapiro?

Dr Shapiro: I understand. The same thing happened in Ottawa when I gave a speech to a group a couple of weeks ago. We were dealing with the question of quality daily physical education. Of course, it is impossible to be against having quality daily anything.

Mrs Cunningham: That is right.

Dr Shapiro: My point of view of physical education is not that it is not important. I would be silly; of course it is important. On the other hand, we do not have to think of physical education as gym or football. The actual recommendation I made, which caused so much furore, I meant as a sort of fun thing, which is that what we ought to do is stop the school buses a

mile from school and have them walk to and from.

Interjections.

Dr Shapiro: I had not meant it entirely seriously but just to say that we have to find ways of accomplishing objectives that are not the standard, canned course way of doing things or we can never squeeze in all the objectives we have for young people.

Anyway, this is not to the point of your question. To get back to—

Mr Jackson: But I do support increased physical activity. As you know, the studies show that the oxygen increase does help in some reading levels and all sorts of things. This committee did not deal with the issue of a more crowded curriculum several months ago.

Dr Shapiro: But the question of the gender curriculum is a lot more serious than that. It exists in two different ways, from my point of view. I have two concerns about it.

One is that we are getting to a situation where we have virtually no males in the elementary school. It is the reverse problem, in a sense, that we have in other contexts. There are fewer and fewer and fewer men who are going to be in the province's elementary schools, and I think that bodes very badly for the future of young people in them. We are working with the Teacher Education Council, Ontario to try and think of ways in which we might attract young men to elementary school teaching.

To get to the main point of your question, on the question of gender equality, I think it is a question of dealing primarily, but not entirely, with young girls differently than we have. It is not so much a question of changing the actual program, although it is partly a question of that. It is also a question of changing the organization. For example, I am quite attracted to the notion, in some respects, of teaching math and science to girls separately, to have special classes for girls and special classes for boys, because we know quite a lot about what happens when you do that. What happens is that the achievement of the young girls increases.

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In the long run that is not the solution, because in the long run you want that not to have to be done in order to get the effect, but in the short run it might be one of the kinds of things you start to consider. However retrogressive it seems in some respects, I think we have to learn to consider alternatives of that sort if we are serious about not waiting for another 30 years to go by

while we get the achievement we want to get and get the opportunities open to the young girls in our midst that we need to have open for them, because it still is the case in the world that surrounds them as young girls that the message to them is not the same as the message to young boys.

I am not talking about the school world, but in the general world around them they do not in fact see out there as much reinforcement as we sometimes like to believe of the opportunities that are to be thought of for themselves.

Mr Jackson: I would beg to differ with you. Television, in and of itself, is reflecting changes in society and I find that our school curriculum is not keeping up with television, which is contemporary in its view of the roles for young women and young men. That is another debate. I find much of the solution in terms of changing some of the attitudes in young boys is as important a part of the process of opening—

Dr Shapiro: I agree. I had not yet got to that.

Mr Jackson: Okay. I did not wish to dwell on that. We are getting more philosophical—I just wondered if you had some track you were taking recommendation one from our first report, which is of great interest to me. I know when I talked to the minister I got a one-sentence answer about it: "We are very committed and in the fullness of time we will see some positive"—

Dr Shapiro: I am not so sure about the fullness of time. If you can recall, there were a series of initiatives announced in the last throne speech that had to do with a full range of elementary and secondary school program, from junior kindergarten through the end of grade 12. What we have done is taken the first recommendation of the committee and given it to each of the working groups; we have separate working groups set up, both internal to the ministry and external to it, for each of those programs and given them the charge to make sure that each of these kinds of issues is reflected in the kinds of program changes that they are going to bring forward to realize those throne speech initiatives. So we hope we will see—

Mr Jackson: Okay. I would also hope that your ministry is linked with the Minister without Portfolio responsible for women's issues, who has a committee dealing with violence. I know that education was invited to be part, and I would hope that had a curriculum focus and not an after the fact—

Dr Shapiro: Fair enough. That is exactly what is required.

Mr Jackson: My second area of questioning has to do with—

The Chairman: Excuse me, Mr Jackson. We had requests for supplementaries from Mr Kozyra, Mrs Cunningham and Mrs O'Neill. Would you prefer to finish your line of questioning first or are you going to start a new one?

Mr Jackson: I am going to move into a new area and then I am finished, so I will hold for supplementaries.

The Chairman: Okay. We will ask that you be brief.

Mr Kozyra: Mine was not a supplementary. It was additional, if time permitted.

Mrs O'Neill: Mine is not supplementary, either.

Mrs Cunningham: Mine was a supplementary just to underline or ask a further question with regard to Dr Shapiro's comments on the availability of teachers. It may have been touched. If it has, I apologize and I will withdraw and read Hansard.

I think all of the things you have talked about since I have been here have to do with daily physical education. We both smile about that. I love your recommendation about the mile and let them walk. We spent seven years on the London board arguing about whether it is one mile or 1.2 miles. You remember those days.

Dr Shapiro: Yes.

Mrs Cunningham: That is the daily phys ed, which I think can happen now with innovative teaching. I think it can happen within the school, within the classroom and outside in the community walking around the block. People just do not do it, but they could do it, and they do do it in some schools.

The other point you made about teaching of mathematics to young women: I think that can happen now, too, even though you offered an interesting suggestion. By the way, I have read the research based on factual research about how you can teach them separately. But I think that can happen, too. I think one of the greatest concerns the public has right now in the quality of teaching is who is going to be teaching the children. I was really sorry to hear you say that we have fewer men interested in teaching in the elementary levels. I thought that was a trend that was reversing and that men were moving towards it.

Dr Shapiro: It has gone through two processes. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was an increasing proportion of men interested in

elementary school education. In the 1980s, it is starting to go in the other direction.

Mrs Cunningham: History does repeat itself. The other point I would like to ask you to maybe reflect on is—

Mr Mahoney: Is this a leadership debate?

Mr Jackson: It is going to degenerate into a leadership debate any second, just watch.

Mrs Cunningham: Since we share the same background, as well as yourself, Mr Mahoney, I might add, there will not be a debate on this one, I do not think.

Mr Mahoney: Don't hold your breath.

Mrs Cunningham: My problem with the other part is that we are looking for more teachers, and I wonder if you have tapped into the mature teacher, the people who have left the teaching profession for a while and are ready to come back with greater skills than ever. I would like you to respond to that.

The other one I would like you to respond to is this whole admissions thing about the kinds of people who teach in the first place. Is this a priority? Admissions are different all across the province.

Dr Shapiro: Let me say a couple of things. First, on the question of attracting mature teachers, I look at that problem in a slightly different way. We cannot be sure, because our data is not very clear, but it looks as if most people who are certified teachers but not teaching, who either left teaching or decided to pursue some other career because they could not get a teaching job, for example—there are not many of those people applying for the teaching jobs that are now coming open. There are a lot of them out there. We know exactly what the numbers are, but most of them have gone on with other careers.

So what I am trying to think through and what I have put on the agenda of the Teacher Education Council, Ontario is the question: How do we attract not only some of those people back to teaching but other middle-aged professionals of a whole variety of different types into teaching? For example, I think there is a population of middle-aged engineers who might well be attracted into science and math teaching in the high school, let's say. I am not positive there is, but there certainly has been shown to be that population in other jurisdictions. I have some interest in that, and the council will be pursuing both of those issues.

Second, on the question of who is getting into teacher education, we have good news and bad

news in that regard. The demand is huge, so faculties are accepting very high-performing students—that is, academically performing; they have very high grade point averages—and they are refusing thousands and thousands of what seem to me to be reasonably well-qualified people. The question of whether academic performance should be the criterion on which we place most reliance is the issue that needs to be worked out more fully.

In fairness to the faculties, there are a number of them—the University of Toronto is an interesting example—which try to do additional work. The average age of the U of T bachelor of education program student this past year, not the current year, is 28. They are not coming into that program directly from undergraduate school. Almost all of them have really quite an interesting set of relevant experiences to bring to the classroom. The age in all the faculties is rising, not as dramatically as at Toronto, but quite rapidly because faculties do place some emphasis on experience. That will be another item on the Teacher Education Council, Ontario agenda, how to deal with the admissions problem in a way that is really effective.

However, our major problem in the next few years will not be so much the quality of people being admitted to the profession, since there are large numbers of applicants who seem to be very well qualified, but how to get the universities to accept a larger number of students so that we can supply sufficient numbers of teachers in the province, even though we import traditionally about a quarter of the new teachers we appoint.

Mrs Cunningham: Could I just make a comment?

The Chairman: If it is very brief, because it is Mr Jackson's line of questioning.

Mrs Cunningham: There was another time in the history of this province when we had the same problem, the 1950s, when people went to summer school and what not. If you are getting people from other professions or people who have even taught before who do not have university degrees—by the way, that is a group we are not tapping into—we have to educate them. We are talking about year-round schools for young people. Why do we not talk about year-round school for teacher training?

Dr Shapiro: I think that is quite possible.

Mrs Cunningham: My other plea would be: Could you please deal with this one quickly and come up with a solution since it has been on the agenda for about 20 years?

Dr Shapiro: I can almost guarantee it will be on for another 20 years.

Mrs Cunningham: But you know what I am saying.

Dr Shapiro: Yes.

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Mr Jackson: Bernard, we got into a discussion about the changing emphasis on schools. I, for one, like to watch trends and analyse them. I see educational trends, I see economic trends, I see political trends and I see politicians reacting to each of them differently. I am really trying to get a sense if we are getting a proper sense of vision from the ministry, if the ministry knows where it is going. Let me predicate my concern by saying a few points that I have observed.

I was very delighted at Mr Conway's first and now his second reappointment to education. I think he has the capacity to think in those terms, in all three areas, whereas I thought his predecessor was rather limited in his range of vision and his contribution at the cabinet table. I am pleased you are the deputy in the sense that you can provide that analysis and approach.

Mr Mahoney: God, he speaks well of you, Cam.

Mr Jackson: We will get into that in a moment.

Mr Furlong: No, we will not.

Mr Jackson: The fact is that there are several tensions occurring within the political arena that impact education and there are certain tensions occurring in the community that seem to be all financial. That can only get worse unless we get a view and a vision articulated from the political sphere that put the people at ease who are having to pay the increased costs. There is no one in this room who would for a moment believe that we are not going to see anything but increased costs in education. We are broadening the base of services; the clientele is being expanded; the Liberal convention is touting lifelong learning. We are now embracing the entire community. They are now going to be shareholders in an educational system and therefore we have within that the rationale for the increased expenditures.

I am not uncomfortable putting on record that I support that. That is a sense of vision that I have always shared about education. I support the notion that child care centres in schools are appropriate in that they are public facilities and those kinds of things, but the community is going to have to pay for it and therefore they are going to have to better understand and have that articulated. So in that context, I think Mr

Conway is the better minister to be able to articulate that and you are a better deputy to do that.

However, I have concerns about the Premier's view which he seems to be articulating. Over the five years, I have been trying to track and analyse that. We have had what I call his Oriental view, which his Premier's Council's report and others talk about, this high-technology Oriental, that the Japanese have a better system and we are moving towards that, which is in and of itself a tension within the educational community. We know the Japanese are looking at our system and saying it is wonderful chaos and it is exciting and vibrant.

It is that agenda which concerns me. I happen to believe the direction is less in the area of a high-technology, sterile, corporate profit perspective, that we should be moving towards a more global view, which is a larger version of a sense of community that we can develop in our curriculum and in understanding our children, a more humane view.

I would like to get a sense from you as to where you think the ministry should be going. I cannot ask you who is going to win in the tension I have already illustrated. I have my own theory as to who is going to win out in that, but I would hope that within the ministry there still exist those who would set out that vision so that at least it is an option that the government can pursue. That strikes me as an important question when we deal with increasing costs for education, because we are going to have to explain to the community that we are a changing society, an evolving society, an improving society, and education is the key. Then we can address all these other subissues which Richard and I have raised.

Dr Shapiro: Just in a very brief response, I think you are right that the vision of the system needs to be communicated to the people who are being asked to support it. It not only needs to be communicated, it needs to be worked out with them in a sense. We cannot just announce it; we have to hopefully lead by providing options that people will find attractive, and not hang on to but enter into as part of their own commitment. So I think that is true.

I think for that to be possible, the vision has to focus people's attention more clearly than we are sometimes able to do, simply because, as I said earlier, I do not think the schools can be an all-purpose social agency. We may want to broaden the base, we may want to incorporate more people, we may want to do a lot of things, but we cannot do everything. We need to be able

to say what it is our priorities are and what it is we are trying to do.

My own sense, at least in terms of the work I do with my colleagues in the ministry, is that there is a great interest in trying to achieve that end. That always produces tension, as obviously there are differences of view as to just what the vision ought to be. I tried to give some sense of my own concerns earlier. I do not think you had yet arrived. I really do think that we can create a sense of vision if we admit up front that there is both an educational and a social purpose to schooling, and we specify within each of those, in the first case the educational, which is easier to focus on, and then in terms of the social context we are trying to achieve, what the end result is.

I do not want to repeat that, because I did it here earlier, but I would be glad to discuss it again some time with the committee. That is worth a really long conversation.

Mr Jackson: Briefly, the area that concerns me most is the whole area of capital and planning, because it is a current crisis that we are attempting to deal with. It strikes me that unless we get that vision articulated, we cannot encourage school boards and municipalities to look at schools as multipurpose institutions, that the municipality, for shrinking municipal resources, is not off competing to build an art centre—in my community, which it is attempting to do—separate and distinct from any integration with a theatre arts curriculum in our community and the limited dollars our school board has. So we further the tension within the school.

We have examples in schools. You have adopt-a-school programs where they seem to be following the view of the Premier's Council, that we are going to introduce a more high-technology view and direction. In Ottawa, we have a school that is committed completely to environmental studies. It is an ethos that permeates the entire school curriculum and everything they do, and that is very exciting. They are obviously following another vision.

I see that the school boards out there, good school boards, creative school boards and principals and their staff are coming up with these ideas, but until we finally make the decision as to where we are going, we can then impose—and it does require imposition—on municipalities certain rules for the construction of schools, to integrate them with—

We took a proposal to integrate them with a nursing home. So the same curriculum experience we gave for day care, I raised the question, why are we not doing it in geriatrics. They said,

"It has never been done." It is the same lab in the school, an opportunity, a learning experience for kids. Obviously, 20 years from now, we are going to be needing three times as many geriatric assistant support services as we will child care. The statistics all show that, yet nowhere are we getting that sense of vision and integration, and we can then say: "Here is a set of rules and assumptions. We can do more for less money." Then we avoid this tension, this fight in the community over these limits. We are going to have a Proposition 13 just as sure as we are sitting here unless we can convince people, as you said, to share that sense of vision.

If you were to leave the ministry and Mr Conway were to leave the ministry, I would be a little concerned, because within that, I think you are able to articulate that.

So I will leave it at that point. You may wish to comment on it further, but it is my major concern on where education is going to go in the next 10 years.

Dr Shapiro: I might just have brief comments. One is, I think the trick will be to try to develop a vision that gives people a sense of direction without making it impossible for that adopt-a-school program to go on its high-technology vision and the environmental studies program to go on its vision. That is, the province is not going to be so coherent that everybody will march to the tune of exactly the same drummer, however there is a lot we can still do to approach that. So I accept that point.

I am not planning to leave the Ministry of Education.

Mr Jackson: Good.

Dr Shapiro: I do have a question. I am not sure what the agenda time for the committee is. I had thought I was going to be here from 10 to 12. If I am going to be here longer, I have to make other arrangements, because I have people expecting me in the office.

The Chairman: In fairness to Dr Shapiro, we did have questions by Mr Kozyra and Mrs O'Neill, if you could keep them very brief. Would you be available for say five minutes more?

Dr Shapiro: Absolutely.

The Chairman: Thank you, we appreciate that.

Mr Kozyra: It relates to the question of the educational function and the social function, and maybe simplifying. In the good old days of the one-room red-brick schoolhouse, the teacher's role was to fuel up the pot-bellied stove, keep

some discipline and teach the three Rs. As a former teacher and so on, it is my opinion that that role has become much more complicated. The demands are higher.

1210

I guess the focus is on that tension that exists or the balance that seems to be struck, with the guidance of the ministry and so on, between the social and the educational function. The teacher is expected to relate to an ever more varied curriculum, the individual education of 30 students in the classroom, mainstreaming and the growing threat of litigation. I am wondering where you strike that balance, whether it is an ever-shifting balance and what direction it is going in. How do you handle the burnout that is a result of it, etc?

Dr Shapiro: I do not know how to handle the balance, precisely. That is something we are going to learn over time out of experience. I do not have any magic rule or algorithm that will enable us to do that. Relative to the burnout question, however, I do have a view. That is, I think that the incredible pressure we put on teachers to produce in this variety of areas does produce burnout much more easily than we are accustomed to thinking. It may be that we will have to think of teaching differently in the future from the way we did in the past. I hate to use this analogy, but maybe we have to think about it in terms of the army; "Twenty years and you're out," so to speak.

We would need appropriate financial arrangements to support that; we cannot have people passed out after 20 years when they are still, after all, very young. But I really think that is an option and those kinds of options need to be thought through because if we are going to continue to make these demands on people, then we will have to treat them appropriately. We then need to expect high standards, but it is like running the marathon. You cannot do the marathon at the speed you do the 100-yard dash. If you expect that, you have only yourself to blame and you are in for disappointment later on.

If we expect and are going to insist on high performance in this whole range of areas, we might have to think of different models of how to do teaching. I gave just one. There are loads of others that could be considered. That is just one that appealed to me because it was a big change and so it helps to clarify my mind on issues, but there are other ways that could be handled. We will have to think those through. But I do not know. I do not have the model yet.

Mrs O'Neill: I want to ask this while Dr Shapiro is here. As you know, Dr Shapiro, we are going to have Dr Macdonald this afternoon. From your ministry we just have these recommendations. I am very happy they were able to be reproduced for this afternoon, but I do find the terminology "program implementation and review branch" a little less than satisfying, knowing how the implementation is taking place. I know that branch is in very good hands and I know it is quite a large branch, but when and how will we get the update of how this is happening?

Dr Shapiro: When you say "this," what are you referring to?

Mrs O'Neill: I do not know whether you got the same piece of paper I did. If you take recommendation 11, it says, "program implementation and review branch." That does not tell me a lot.

Dr Shapiro: No, it does not. I agree with you.

Mrs O'Neill: These questions are already emerging this early in our discussions, and I would suggest it might be quite helpful to us as members of the committee if we had a little more meat.

Dr Shapiro: I am not going to try to do that now, but I could answer this particular question. I think what we will try to do is expand this material for you to give you the details of what is actually being done and not just who is doing it. It is not helpful to know who is doing something; you want to know what they are doing.

Mrs O'Neill: How do you feel you could fit that in?

Dr Shapiro: I do not mean that I could do it between now and this afternoon.

Mrs O'Neill: No, I am just wondering whether it would be possible to have it before we go out on the road next week or at least get a little more detail. I guess that is what I am asking.

Dr Shapiro: I think we can do that. I will just work with my colleagues inside the ministry to get it done for the committee.

Mrs O'Neill: Madam Chairman, would you consider it reasonable to have it presented to us at noon on Thursday? I do not like to put time frames in so spontaneously, but I am a little bit concerned about our all leaving here and then arriving in Kingston some time on Sunday night.

Dr Shapiro: I think we could certainly have something. I do not want to suggest it would be as full as it might otherwise be, but we could certainly have something more detailed than this by Thursday noon.

The Chairman: For whatever you could have available, we would be very appreciative. Dr Shapiro, I would like to thank you on behalf of the committee, not only for the time and effort you have expended and the valuable perspective you have given us, but also for the very succinct, forthright and humorous manner in which you have done so. We very much appreciate what you have given us today.

Dr Shapiro: Thank you. I have had a good time myself.

The Chairman: Now we know Dr Shapiro's definition of a good time, or one of them.

The committee stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon. In keeping with our new image, we will start on time at two, so I ask members to try to be here at two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1215.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in committee room 1.

The Chairman: I would like to open up this afternoon's session of the select committee on education, as we continue in our mandate to look at the financial picture of education in Ontario relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances. We are very pleased to have with us this afternoon Professor Ian Macdonald, who currently is with York University, but he had yet another claim to fame when he chaired the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education. I believe you were empowered in 1984 to report on the financing of education in Ontario.

Dr Macdonald: Yes, June 1984.

The Chairman: I think members do have before them both the summary of the Macdonald commission recommendations and in addition—I do not know if you have been given this, Professor Macdonald, but it is a summary of which of your recommendations have actually been implemented or are in progress at the moment.

Dr Macdonald: I would want to see that.

The Chairman: We will be sure to give a copy of that to you. Without further ado, please begin whenever you are ready.

IAN MACDONALD

Dr Macdonald: Thank you very much, members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario. I presume, like death and taxes, this is a subject that is always with us, because in fact it was almost three and a half years ago to the day that we submitted our report on 4 March 1986.

As a result, I feel somewhat like the negligent student who has sat up all night swotting for the final examination, because I must confess I had to work hard last evening to remind myself of exactly what we said in that report three and a half years ago and, more important, why we said it.

Mr Keyes: Do you still agree with it?

Mrs O'Neill: We all read it once a month.

Dr Macdonald: I know you have had a fairly heavy morning with my old colleague Bernard

Shapiro. I cannot promise to lighten the load in any way, but I will do my best.

I know we on the commission thought we had prepared a rather important report, and I do appreciate seeing the number of things that have happened here, because I had not really heard a great deal about it, how much of it or whether any of it had been transported to the pages of history.

Just for a few moments before I actually address some of the thinking behind our recommendations in the report, I hope you will forgive me if I make two or three gratuitous comments on the broader subject of education.

It is hard to have been in education one way or another for most of my 60 years without making some comments of a nonfinancial nature. That, of course, is important, because finances are the end and not the beginning. Obviously, what one is trying to do is design a financial system that will meet certain objectives and purposes in education.

For me still, as I reread the report, I think the most important thing I said, certainly the thing I felt most strongly about, is right in the preface to the report, where I said: "Some of us believe that we can never repay the contribution of those teachers to our enjoyment of life. Few of us have the privilege of saying so in a public document. Therefore, to the teaching profession in the province of Ontario, I dedicate this report. One need not travel far from this province to realize what a priceless asset we possess in our publicly supported school system."

I say that because I often am concerned to see the extent of denigration that goes on about our educational system in general and, more important, about our teachers in particular. On the very day that Mr Brown's letter arrived inviting me, on behalf of the committee, to come this afternoon, the widow of my former high school Latin teacher died. That was rather an interesting coincidence because it reminded me—looking around I see there may be one or two here like me who still remember the old grade 13 departmental examinations.

Mr Mahoney: Don't look at me; I took them twice.

Dr Macdonald: Back in 1948 I remember doing the old grade 13 departmental examinations. There were special markers for those who were candidates for scholarships in the various universities. Therefore, some of us were treated

rather like prize racehorses by our teachers and there was a great deal of preparation that went into that particular sweepstake.

I was doing 12 grade 13 subjects rather than the usual nine, because this enhanced one's chances in the race. My Latin teacher spent every Saturday morning teaching me grade 13 Latin, and history along the way, outside of the classroom. That was every Saturday morning. I calculated, when his widow died—he must have been about 31, and I remember there were always three little children running around in the background, and I said, “There was someone who gave every Saturday morning to me, one of his students, for that purpose.”

Does that still continue? Well, it does, in my experience. I still hear stories like that all the time, and certainly it is the experience of our own five children, who very recently went through the public school system of this province.

If I may, let me say that I feel there is so much mythology about the good old days which I think is often sheer romanticism. You will know well, if you look at the curriculum today in grade 11 in physics; that is what I was doing in first year in university, maths, physics and chemistry. If you look at the curriculum in biology it was not even imagined 40 years ago when I was in high school.

If you look at the numbers of people who get into university today who never would have got in at the time I was going to university—in fact, when I was president of York I did a survey which revealed that some 85 per cent of the students in York University came from a family, as I did myself, where neither parent had gone to university.

We talk about quality. Quality is a very subjective thing, particularly where you have what I call the quantitative theory of quality. Small classrooms are not necessarily better; large classrooms are not necessarily worse, depending on who is at the head of the classroom. Certainly at the university level I remember that some of the best teaching I ever had in terms of the opening up of the mind was from the late Professor Harold Innis at the University of Toronto, and some of the worst I had was in Oxford University where the teaching was one on one, because if you have a one-on-one ratio and you have a bad teacher, you are really in trouble; there is no escape. So we have to be careful about that.

Finally, where the teachers are concerned, let me say that in my own experience I have found nothing more physically and emotionally demanding than good teaching, and that includes

administering York University and it includes working on heavy construction in earlier days. To teach well, to give a good lecture—when I finish my lectures, even now, after these many years, I have to just about go to my office and change my shirt. It is a demanding occupation and I think we should remember that when we are talking about the role and the place of the teacher.

Obviously, there are great problems today. There are excessive and unreasonable demands on teachers where we expect them to be, in that modern term, care givers as well as teachers. We expect the school to substitute for the home in so many respects of traditional upbringing. Obviously there is less emphasis on the written word today, and I think that has tended to give a colouration to what we think of our school graduates, because they may not write or speak as well. If that is a problem, and I think it is, then we should address that particular problem and not throw the baby out with the bathwater and criticize the whole system. And we have the dropout problem, which of course should demand our attention.

But I think the biggest danger is the thing we see every day today from some very highly placed people as well as from media and other commentators, what I regard as the confusion between education and occupational preparation.

1420

Just on the weekend I was looking at a little report from a school system in Korea which was talking about this very thing, just to demonstrate that this is not something that is a preoccupation only in Ontario. It said: “In fact, education in Korea has long been regarded as the ladder to high social status. The teachers claim that their work in the school is downgraded to cramming of encapsulated knowledge required for entrance exams, in which the students are being slave-driven by the competition to enter a prestigious college. What they want is not a financial benefit, but making schools undertake the original task of helping students understand what the problems are and guiding them towards the material and the processes of thinking that will produce reasonable and idealistic conclusions.”

I tend to feel we should be very careful about this preoccupation with thinking that education and occupational relevance are the same thing. They are both important, but they are different things. I do not know how many of you who might have done trigonometry or some such thing in high school remember it carefully or have applied it. I certainly do not and I certainly have not. But there are two legitimate functions,

education and occupational preparation. Let us deal with them separately and properly, but let's not confuse them.

Finally, let's not forget how quickly trends do change. If it does not sound unduly like self-congratulation, I remember that in 1977, in our York University submission to the Ontario Council on University Affairs, we said the demand for university places would be growing considerably, at a time when everyone was saying: "We're not going to have anyone in university. What are we going to do with our excess capacity?"

I remember in 1979, when one or two or my fellow presidents said, "We should really be getting together and making a corporate decision about which faculty of education to close down in the province," we said, "In seven or eight years, people will be asking, once again, 'Where are we going to get enough teachers to put in the classrooms?'" No one had looked at the phenomenon of early retirement and the age demography and teaching profile and so on.

Thank you for your indulgence in that preface, which has a relationship to the report, because, as I say, I know you are dealing with equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances. As I say, the question is, for what?

Obviously, there is never enough money. As an educator, I would of course argue and have argued that education should be a priority. In the last 20 years, when I have been engaged in this public debate, I have certainly seen a considerable change in the recognition of the fact that, in these days when human resources have to have a priority, we must do everything possible to give education a fiscal priority. But of course, as a former Deputy Treasurer of Ontario, I recognize there are other constraints as well.

Accountability must always be monitored and enforced. As you know, we have made a certain number of recommendations about accountability in our report. But for me and for us on the commission, the really interesting question is the question of equity. If there is a single thing that guided our thought processes throughout the work on our report over two and a half years or more, it was to strive for equity wherever possible.

Let me just give you three examples of that and how we perceive equity in those examples: first, an expenditure example, the so-called contentious issue of pooling; second, a revenue example, the question of the tax base and where you get your money; third, a special interest

example, which is the case of cottagers in Ontario.

When we started to look at pooling, and you remember we were working within an environment in which you have just had the extension of separate school funding—highly contentious, strong feelings throughout—I think probably most of us on the commission would have agreed that if we did not have our history in Ontario and in Canada and if we were starting from scratch, we would prefer a single school system and a single funding system. But, of course, that was not our social contract at this time of Confederation and it was not our history. Therefore, we said, given those circumstances, and given the reality of a public school system and a separate school system, we felt that there must be fair sharing of the revenues.

So, of course, we made the argument in support of the sharing of commercial and industrial assessment and its revenues. I think, if I am not mistaken, it was the first time that a commission that included both Protestant and Roman Catholic members, of the various commissions or inquiries that have taken place on this subject, had agreement in such a document on that subject.

Our reason simply was because we perceived it to be fair. If you had the two acknowledged systems, then the two systems should have equal access. We took the position that we would leave it to someone else to make the argument for unfairness. We will make the argument for fairness, and that governed our thinking on the question of pooling.

On the question of the tax base, as you know, we supported the proposition of moving away from the property tax and more in the direction of the income tax; away from the municipal tax base, more in the direction of the provincial base; and providing a combined system in which we would have a retail property tax credit to an extent. Again, this was not only in recognition of the traditional question of the burden of taxation and the fairness of the burden of taxation, but it was a recognition that we have a considerable change today in social habits and circumstances. With the return-to-home phenomenon, and so on, often more than one group of a family unit lives in the same house and much greater income is generated in that house than the traditional property tax base.

Of all the things that we are a little disappointed in, I think it is that more attention has not been paid to what we thought was a fairly novel system, certainly compared with the systems that

exist in other jurisdictions, for relieving some of the property tax base and transferring some of the incidence to the income tax.

Third, on the cottage question, this is really a very interesting one because, as we all know today so well from the debate about the general sales tax, taxes are very much in the eye of the beholder or in the eye of the ox that is getting gored. It is very easy to say that if people have summer cottages, they have two homes, and why should they have any case to be made about excessive taxation?

Here again, we felt two things. One, cottages in Ontario are not just the preserve of the élite. I do not own a cottage myself, but I have watched my sister and my brother-in-law build one from the ground up by themselves, as so many people did. It is not an élite phenomenon in Ontario. This is something that is very much a part of the public life of Ontario, and we think that it is an important part.

Second, people who choose to use their leisure time or their discretionary time in that direction, rather than in playing golf or going on trips around the world, find that they are paying an increasingly heavy burden for that particular preference compared with other things; a preference which we think is important to preserve. We said that there are some special interests, and this is one of them, which deserve examination and deserve consideration. That is why we singled out that kind of item.

1430

There are a lot of things in the report that perhaps are only indirectly related to the strict terminology of your financing mandate, but as you know, we also spoke about jurisdictional questions, about school board boundaries and about a much greater degree of collaboration between the school boards. I am glad to see and understand that some of those things are happening.

Toward the end of the report, part 2, section 7, we alluded to a number of other things which we did not have time to deal with but which we felt were very important. I do hope that this committee, the Ministry of Education or someone in responsibility will be looking at these things and taking them seriously, because we felt that they were serious propositions.

With respect to issues such as greater community involvement in the schools, if there is this concern about breakdown in the fabric of the schools, surely it is important to have even stronger community involvement in the schools. Second, there is the importance of adult basic

education, recognizing that schools—although in their history and even in their construction they are designed for children and young people—none the less must, will and should serve an increasing number of adults, as well. We felt that should be a priority for consideration.

We also commented on the obvious importance of the new information technology and the hope that this would receive priority attention in educational circles as a means of overcoming a number of the problems of the schools: relevance, which I referred to earlier, boredom, innovation and so on. Finally, there is the suggestion that we hope the Ministry of Education or some affiliated body would maintain the kind of research, contemplation and consideration of the issues of financing that we did in our report.

As I recall, the interesting thing in the work of our commission is that even though there had been various inquiries and a lot of work done, when we got down to it, we were addressing a number of important, basic questions at first hand, and there were lags in the data and in the information available to us, which we had to rather quickly assemble. So I do hope that will not be lost sight of as an important part of the ongoing process.

Those are some of the general reflections that I had in doing my examination preparation late last night. I am sure there are many other questions now.

The Chairman: We regret that we made you do so much homework, but we are very glad to have your expertise.

Mr Kozyra: I appreciated your comments on the value of education and educators, having come from that and chosen this for the time being.

You referred to equity and the concept that you referred to was education being everyone's responsibility, but not everyone is willing to accept it in some ways, especially financially. I am wondering if you would comment on that aspect, that global tax or responsibility, as opposed to pressures every now and then to specify it, for example, the dedicated tax, whether it be lot levies, the gasoline tax that is directed to northern roads, the tire tax that goes towards the environment or the softwood lumber tax that people say should be directed to reforestation and so on. I wonder if you could comment on that as it relates to education and the problem or the concept of dedicating specifically to that, and what it means in the larger sense of financing.

Dr Macdonald: I do not know how far I can go to help you with that, and certainly I do not think I can say anything that would be novel. Having come up through the provincial Treasury tradition at a period of my life, I have some respect for the nondedicated tax levy system. In other words, a government has a number of responsibilities to fulfil and it should raise its taxes in a manner commensurate with its judgement of the extent to which it is going to fulfil those responsibilities.

On the other side of the argument is the proposition that some activities involve very large sums of money. Some people hold the point of view that it is important to remind people exactly what that is costing them as taxpayers, which can be a two-edged sword because on the one hand, it can turn people against that activity and on the other hand, it can provide some appreciation of exactly how costly those items are and therefore the value that attaches to them.

In the case of education we certainly did not suggest that property tax is something that should disappear as far as paying part of the burden of educational costs is concerned, for several reasons. First of all, it is just not realistic with the extent of public expenditure requirements today to give up tax fields. Clearly, treasurers are looking for new sources of revenue all the time. But more important, we felt that we should not escape entirely from the concept that education has a local flavour as well.

Throughout our report you will see some recommendations that point in the direction of greater centralism and others that point in the direction of greater local autonomy. Generally speaking, I think our bias is to want to preserve not necessarily autonomy, but as much local involvement, concern and responsibility as possible, and not have everything centralized in a large bureaucracy at Queen's Park. Some things that have to be done obviously lead in the direction of the centre but in the case of the local system we wanted local boards to continue to have a meaningful place. We wanted the local communities to continue to be making a direct contribution to the financing but not to the extent, as I say, that was inequitable.

When you come to subjects such as lot levies, it seems to me that I regard those as a kind of override on the generality of the tax system. But every so often you get certain special circumstances that require special extra financing. Obviously, if you are getting demographic change and a sudden spurt in local requirements for building skills and providing education, that

is not necessarily a permanent or long-term part of the process, but you have to find ways of dealing with it immediately. So I think it is quite acceptable to design special-purpose means of dealing with those special-purpose requirements. But as a general long-term proposition, I think our feeling was to prefer that the general Treasury meet the overriding public requirements and not become overly specific about relating service to cost in that manner.

Mr Kozyra: I have two more questions. I would like to touch on that confusion you referred to between education and the occupational preparation and relate it to accountability. It is my feeling that too often the occupational preparation is translated as the positive accountability; that is where you get the results you can measure. The other kind of education is considered almost a luxury that we can no longer afford. You touched on that and I wonder if you can just enlarge on that.

1440

Dr Macdonald: It is really difficult because it depends on where you start, it depends on the type of job or type of situation you are describing and it depends on your vantage point. For example, I remember about eight years ago attending a meeting where there were about 48 or 50 CEOs of Canadian corporations and the subject was what kind of people do you want to hire. Now the interesting thing is the CEOs were saying, almost without exception, "We want people who have a good general education, who know how to think, who know how to analyse, who know how to adapt; people we can bring along in our specific requirements under our own roof."

I made a point, without attribution to that discussion, of following up with half a dozen heads of personnel departments in those same corporations and saying, "What kind of people do you want to hire these days?" "MBAs," they all said, "MBAs." In other words, among the personnel managers this was a kind of buzzword of the day, a kind of cult, whereas the heads of the companies who were looking at the overall evolution of the company were saying people with a general education. I am not sure why the CEOs were not talking to the heads of personnel or vice versa; that is another question. So there is that aspect.

You see, I think the most important thing in the world where education is concerned is opportunity. By opportunity I mean the opportunity for people to fulfil themselves to the maximum of their creative potential. This is not, again, an

élitist thing. I do not think being a university president is more important than being a welder, but I think it is important that both people have the opportunity to be what they want to be. This raises the question of what kind of educational system do you create that will open up the recognition that people may not have had motivation or background or opportunity, that those are things they could do and would like to do if they even knew about them in the first place. I have been in and am still in situations with people I know who will suddenly realize that they have a tremendous interest or aptitude in something but circumstances never led them that way.

That is why I think the school system has such a responsibility not to be preoccupied with routing people in one direction or another. When I was dean of University College a number of years ago, I lived in the University College building just across the park here, an old building with terrible heating problems or an overpowerful steam system pumping in steam to radiators that were not designed for the purpose. So I got to know the young steamfitter who used to come around and sit in my study for hours on end, listening to try to figure out how to adjust these steam pipes.

Every time I went in, I would see he was absorbed in my books in my library and I said to him, "You are quite a reader." "I love it," he said. "These things really turn me on." I said, "But you chose to be a steamfitter," and he said, "Yes, well, that is what my dad did and that is what my grandfather did and that is what they told me I would do."

Again, this is a very delicate business, because as far as I am concerned, a good steamfitter is pretty darned important in the scheme of things, but it is also important that people have the opportunity to do what they Now if all of your preoccupation is with training people, that begs the question of who is going to get training for what. That is why I am concerned about this confusion with the process of opening up the mind and occupational preparation. Of course, at some point, you have to train people and prepare them for jobs. You have to have apprenticeship systems. You have to have systems that enable people to do jobs.

But incidentally, is our society in the future going to be the same kind of society we have had in the past? I know many, many people whose creative work goes on outside their nine-to-five occupation and vice versa. I think it is too easy, if you just have these stereotyped labels, to apply

them to people and that is why I think educational administration and educational policy is such a delicate plant.

Mr Kozyra: My third question: You touched on adult education and it is my impression that as vast as primary and secondary and university and college education are, adult education is like the submerged part of the iceberg that remains to be seen and tapped for its potential and so on. I wonder if you would expand on that.

Dr Macdonald: Again, adult education has always been part of this process I have described, the constant business of enlarging people's horizons, their self-awareness, their opportunities, and the second or third chance.

As you know, one of the great joys to me at York University has always been Atkinson College because there you have had so many people who for one reason or another never got to university or never finished high school, and the sheer vitality they bring to that process and the way it changes their lives and their interests, and hence in turn adds to the productivity and success of the Canadian economy, is remarkable. Over and over again, one sees that happen. I think we have to be very careful to make sure that people have those opportunities and are encouraged to take them up and that the workplace makes it possible for them to have time to do those things.

For example, I mentioned biology. Remember, in days gone by, what the school science curriculum consisted of. It was all pretty dreary stuff. To look at biology today and the interest that lies within that field, there are all kinds of people who I bet you if they had a chance to go to a high school and take one course in biology, with what it tells them about the related life they see around them, it would probably change their whole attitude to their life, to their work and everything else.

I do regard that as very important and if more and more people are going to have the chance to go back to school or to go to school as adults, then we have to be careful that we do not think of schools just in the preadolescent or adolescent mode, as places designed for youngsters, but as places designed for people.

Incidentally, to the great benefit of both the young and the older, as I see it, it has always been interesting to me in my own classes in the university to see the wonderful empathy that develops between younger students and older students, between those who are going full-time and those who are working. That is a value in itself. It does not cost anything. It is a value that

is the byproduct of the chemistry of those people, which they generate together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I used to be very good at drawing and labelling sepals and xylem and phloem. I am kind of disappointed to hear that is gone. My only attribute in science was my classic view, those pictures in botany. God knows I might not have made it out of the high school system given what I used to do in math, but that is another matter.

You should all know that Ian has many connections with this place, not the least of which—I say for Mr Furlong's interest, knowing that he likes to put on the blades from time to time as well—is that he and Eddie Sargent used to conspire to have battles between relatively fit people at York and MPPs at Maple Leaf Gardens, and we really need to institute this again, especially now that he has broken 60 and we might have some sort of a chance against him.

1450

Mr Furlong: Were the MPPs in better shape then?

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, but the duration is marginal.

Mr Mahoney: I have played with you. Why is he talking about you as a hockey player?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wanted to raise just a couple of matters. I appreciate very much your introductory comments in the context of financing, because there is really no point in talking about financing unless you are talking about what we want to do with the bucks. I think from your perspective, once you go through that list of things that have been accomplished and are to one degree or another being instituted over the next number of years, you will be pretty pleased that your report has not gathered the traditional dust and that part of it has been listened to.

If you then think about the major things you have talked about today in terms of your hopes around property tax relief and that kind of burden, still today, in our discussions with the deputy and yesterday with the finance people in general, there is really no desire to grapple with that at this stage. I find that disappointing and I hope the committee will try to get back to the roots of that in terms of why we are stuck in the present system and some of the dangers.

By the way, the tax problems for cottage owners have been raised by others just recently and I think there are twinges of connection from all of us who hear from our constituents. I agree with you that it is not necessarily an elitist matter at all. My father built his cabin on the Ottawa

River when he was 15 years of age, I guess, and it was not a matter of wealth in that circumstance at all.

I want to come around to something I was never clear about in your report. It comes to this little matter of accountability which you did not exactly address specifically. The matter of governance, of course, is tied directly to financing as well. The democratic presumption of accountability to the electorate for expenditure of funds and for the outcomes of a specific program, in this case the education program, is obviously important. In my view, at the moment we have a very confused system in terms of where the average electors go to direct their concern, their anger or their pleasure about change within the education system or the use of moneys in the education system.

I used the example with ministry people of the situation of somebody in Metropolitan Toronto who on certain matters, if he or she knew, would go to the local board and would understand that it is directly under its purview and that in fact the moneys it was spending were over and above the ceiling and for this very specific project which was under that board's own control.

On another matter, they may have to deal with an indirectly elected board at the Metropolitan Toronto area which had done the basic pooling of the resources in the Metro district. As we saw in the last strike around preparation time, it was very hard to get to that steering committee, to that essentially nonelected body at the Metro level.

On yet another level, if somebody was concerned that his board was not implementing full-day senior kindergarten because it had no capital funds to do so because of expansion problems, he would perhaps not know that he should be focusing his concern on the provincial government, which made the announcement without the dollars for capital funding.

My question to you is, what are your thoughts around this whole matter of basic accountability to the electors of the province for the expenditure of funds when we have such a complicated system? In Metro, virtually all the people who support the public board are paying for the entire cost of education. A northern board may be paying for three per cent, four per cent or five per cent of the cost of education. What are your thoughts on the whole question of just where accountability lies within the education system?

Dr Macdonald: First of all, I appreciate your comments on the tax system and the income tax suggestions we made. If I may say so, I hope the committee and others interested in this will

continue to push the Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon) and the Treasury to take these matters seriously.

When those officials look at the kinds of proposals we made about property tax relief and income tax and so on, I can understand why they say: "We have so much to deal with already and life is complicated and a lot of people won't like it as well as those who do. It is easier to leave well enough alone," and so on. I understand why they are shy about getting into it, but at the very least, I think it is a subject that should have much more discussion, debate and consideration publicly.

None of us who do these commission reports is so presumptuous as to think that the government will immediately stand up and embrace it entirely, but at the very least we hope it will become part of the public consideration and debate. That is one thing I have been disappointed in. We certainly hoped there would be much more debate about this question, which would focus attention thereby on so many things, on equity, and as well, on the accountability point.

On the accountability point, I will be quick to say that this is one area I do not think we dealt with very well in our report, because in a way, what we were doing was looking at a lot of structural things and processes. We said, "You should change this school board's jurisdiction or you should change this form of activity," but then when you come down to say who is accountable and how that accountability is carried out, we certainly did not provide you with any answer, but not because we did not talk or think a fair bit about it.

Of course, we heard about it over and over. We had hearings all across the province and we had, as I recall, something like 218 submissions and so on. You put your finger on one thing that was perhaps the strongest refrain throughout. It was this question, not only of trustees but of citizens in general, as to how we engage in the accountability discussion. The feeling, on the one hand, of trustees was that so much sort of came down to them and they had no real influence over what they had to do, and thereby citizens, in turn, were saying, "Whom do we get at as far as the local community is concerned, if not the trustee?"

We did say certain things in the report. Last night, I was regretting having said to the staff that I wanted this commission to be conducted in the cheapest, leanest way because the pages have been falling out of my report ever since. We did say certain things, as you know, about evaluation strategies, about evaluation of personnel and about development implementation and evalua-

tion of programs in schools, but I somehow do not think that is really what you and a lot of people were getting at when they talked about accountability.

I think they simply wanted to feel, is the school in their community doing the kind of job it should be doing and which they expect it to do? If not, how do they go about, not in a heavy-handed way but in a responsible way, getting improvement? How do you get improvement? That is the thing I think is so difficult to come by in any of these social programs. How do you get improvement? Again, I am sorry I do not have an answer for you on that beyond saying that I think it should be on the list, to be dealt with seriously by people with public responsibility.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: I have two other matters. One is the question of mechanisms for financial accountability, if I can put it that way. It was declared by ministry people that there is really no concern in their minds at the moment, and I think generally in the public's mind, about people sort of ripping off the system with illegal usages of public funds. But at this level, we have some mechanisms for dealing with that outside of just the straight internal audit kind of approach that can be taken by the ministry. Meeting this morning right next door was the standing committee on public accounts, which can draw people forward to have discussions about those things, and the SkyDome types can be brought in here.

But we do not really have any mechanism out there for looking in a public way at the expenditure of funds within boards of education across the province. I was telling a story about a retiring director who was very concerned, upon leaving after many years, that the one thing he had not been able to control was the burgeoning bureaucracy that just continued to grow and feed itself rather than directly servicing the students and teachers involved in the system. Maybe one of the things we should be looking at is some sort of mechanism for that kind of financial accountability.

I do not know about members here, but I know board members in various parts of the province who feel that they do not know what is going on in terms of expenditures at their own boards, that the director controls all, or it is some other key player, or it is the director and a group of superintendents, that sort of thing. I do not really have a sense that we now have any idea of how the decisions ought to be made for the kinds of expenditures that are taking place in those areas.

So either from our perspective of knowing whether bucks are being spent well or from the elector's perspective, we do not really have mechanisms at the moment for getting hold of that basic information.

Dr Macdonald: We also heard intimations of that from a number of trustees. We heard about frustration and concern about that as well, and that would appear to continue. There is one thing we did suggest as a way of approaching this particular problem. You may recall that we talked about trying to draw a distinction about the approved level of expenditures, which would be funded by the province, that if local boards and local communities wanted to go beyond that and do more and attach a higher priority to this, that or some form of enrichment, they should do that. In turn, that would draw their trustees into a dialogue with the local community about what the local community's priorities were, over and above the broad, basic educational provision.

I suppose, again, there are those who say that can be unfair because some boards are in a position to do much more locally than others, as you were describing, and it would put an unfair burden on certain local boards. But again, if you take it in the context of the overall distribution of which we were speaking, and pooling and so on, I think that problem should be relieved. Having the local board have real meaning and real representation to and from the public, we certainly thought was a very important thing to preserve and enhance in the system; there is no doubt about that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The final question I have at the moment on this is around the ceilings in general. You have the sheer responsibility for the financing of the education system at the moment, with the province paying only 45 per cent of the overall costs in general across the province, and yet in the determination of what an adequacy level is for the basic programs that are out there, a unilateral decision is made by the Ministry of Education. Then you can get what you are now talking about, looking at what is above the ceiling, separate from that. It begs some questions about accountability in terms of the determination of the ceiling when a major partner, in fact the major partner in the financing is not involved.

Again, if you look at a place like Metropolitan Toronto, it just seemed mind-boggling when we were told, I think, that \$4 million or \$4.5 million was coming from the provincial Treasury into the public education system in Metro, of a \$1.5-billion budget approximately, and yet the ceil-

ings upon which all of that lack of money flow is being based are established by the provincial government alone.

Dr Macdonald: Yes, and you get the other point of view there too. Why should the province have any say in that at all when its stake is so minuscule?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. Did you give any thought to that? I know you did talk about improving the method for calculating and weighing factors to ensure that needs are recognized and compensated adequately. The response to number 33 on page 4 of that little report basically says that they have changed some of the approaches and small board and small school grants are being approved in 1989. There is an ongoing review on all grants, but there is nothing that says anything about the process of determining those grants at this stage.

I am putting it in the context of what Bernard Shapiro and others were telling us, and that is that the province makes determinations about the relative wealth of the communities to be able to carry extra financial burden. We are noticing that they have determined it has a lot more burden than they can carry.

Dr Macdonald: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yet there is no counter-vailing pressure here in terms of the province's onus, except the political accountability in an election several years down the line in the midst of a whole range of other kinds of issues that may be before the public at that time.

Dr Macdonald: Of course, we had a lot of concern, and when we dealt with it directly at one point we reported about expenditures not recognized for grant purposes and new responsibilities created by the province, with the local community then being obliged to find the way of providing it or financing it. Certainly, we did not feel that was fair at all.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In some ways they have come to grips with that, although we see in some programs it is for the first two years and then all of a sudden it becomes a local option. In other cases, it seems to be carried on and rolled into the general grant. Again, the process for determining the grant is unilateralism, and it has the essential control over what a property taxpayer is having to bear.

Dr Macdonald: I think there is a mistaken logic in the assumption that you can treat some of these things like seed money, that you say to the local community, "Here's something to get you started on this and then you're responsible for

going on," because this is not like a business where you are going to capitalize someone to get going in a business and then he is going to earn profit and become self-maintaining.

Once you create expectations, once you introduce a program, once it becomes part of the system, then it has to continue to be paid for. We felt it was unfair for the province to do that and then to say to the local community a couple of years down the line, "That's your worry." It is not really a sensible way of doing business.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The awkward thing, again, is how to determine where the responsibility lies in a specific example. If that has an effect on the ability of a local elementary school to have a librarian operating in the library, rather than a teacher who does that on a part-time basis, because of negotiations that took place at a board level but that are not reflected in a provincial grant, where do you as a local taxpayer again say, "Damn it, I want a librarian in the library full-time and I think that's an important resource centre"?

Dr Macdonald: That is the other side of the danger of becoming too specific at the centre, because if the centre says only, "We fund this, this and this to this degree," then you can frustrate what might be local priorities and sensible priorities.

It may well be that, in a certain community or a certain school, to have a librarian, in terms of the consciousness-raising of the type I was talking about before, may be much more important than having an extra teacher. The financial formula should not become the determinant of that kind of decision, because it could be counter to what is really important educationally.

Mrs O'Neill: Dr Macdonald, I do not know if you remember the last time we met. You were at the Association of Large School Boards in Ontario.

Dr Macdonald: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: The environment made for a very different discussion.

Dr Macdonald: How could I forget?

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Mrs O'Neill: I see that the report is still very much a part of you, though. Even as the afternoon is progressing, you seem to be getting more involved in the thinking that went on there. There are two or three things I wanted to be specific about. You made a recommendation about capital and how it should be related to demonstrated need. As you know, the province has gone up in its contribution in that area by

about 400 per cent. Do you have any further thoughts on that now since that kind of initiative has been taking place? There were words used this morning by our deputy minister that sometimes he feels as if he is running in place in that particular area of his responsibilities. That is kind of a hopeless statement, really, in many ways.

Dr Macdonald: I think I could not really responsibly answer that question, because I have not kept abreast of the trends, the extent to which capitalization has changed relevant to demand and so on to really be able to say whether I think what should have been done or not has been done.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess I wanted to zero in on what you considered were demonstrated needs if you possibly could, because that seemed to be a key phrase that your recommendation had to deal with. Maybe you cannot remember that specific choice of words, and I will pass on that.

Dr Macdonald: I am sorry, it is a little fuzzy.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay, I guess the other has to deal with—and I really like the way in which you continue to do it—putting finance in the whole broader picture of what education is all about. I have very much the same concern as you do, that we do not forget what the word "educate" really means. I wondered how many people—that is not the correct term—corporations are involved in sending their employees on educational leaves to places like York University, if you could just give us any idea. You hear the odd success story. Is there an increase in responsibility between the employer and the educational community in that regard, to either retrain or give that opportunity that you suggested earlier to an individual, perhaps a little later on in his or her life?

Dr Macdonald: Again, I could not give you anything like reasonable numbers, but I can say that I have been at York University for 15 years now, the first 10 as president, and I have found first of all a much readier awareness among employers of the advantage to them as well as to the individual; second, there is a much greater facility in making it possible for people to come and have leave for further instruction; third, during my later years as president I was beginning programs of trying to take instruction to the workplace as well as people from the workplace doing the instruction and I know that they have been carried on and extended; and then of course there is the so-called process of distance education, which has at its origin the very different meaning of geographic distance, but in terms of modern technology can be applied

to the workplace as well where people actually can get instruction by technical means into their workplace. I certainly have seen that increasing.

I think one of the things that would be interesting for the province to do is to encourage even more dialogue communication process between employers and educators on this point. I do not think it is there yet by any means.

Mrs O'Neill: I was going to ask you what you thought government could do in that regard, and I guess you have answered before I asked. I do think that is certainly a challenge we have. Some groups that are into that kind of communication have come before this committee in our previous set of hearings and again, I think there will be one at least coming to us in Kingston.

There is another area totally unrelated to what I have been speaking about that is constantly in the news and, at this particular point in this particular area of the province, seems to be causing a lot of people still to remain extremely uncomfortable. Many research consultant types have made a lot of money on this one, on the reassessment question.

I said yesterday that I do not think we should get terribly involved in this in this committee, simply because it is a municipal decision, but if you could, I wanted you to tell us today why you felt as strongly about this as you must have when you said mandatory, if necessary, because since the report came out there has really been very little movement. I think maybe there has been a 100 per cent increase to the four or five major municipalities that were in it. I think maybe now we are up to somewhere around 10 or 12 and it is being looked at in some very major centres, and then we have some very interesting stuff happening here in Toronto right this week.

But it is still going to continue to be a problem throughout the province, and certainly even the corollary that the equalization factor that went into effect last year has caused many small municipal politicians—and smaller municipalities is the way I should put that—to come down to Queen's Park pretty upset. I had some of that in my own area of responsibility.

Explaining equalization factors is not the easiest thing to do. I am just wondering why you used that and do you feel we are at the point where maybe we should look at mandatory—That is a very long question. I am sorry.

Dr Macdonald: First of all, I agree with you that whereas this committee or any group could spend a great deal of time on that, I would not think it was the place or the top issue that should be taking the time of a select committee on

education. It has, of course, a principal municipal component, as you say.

As far as our work was concerned, the reason we dealt with it at all was part of the overall spirit of what we were trying to do, as I said at the beginning, and that was to say, "Fairness, equity, should be the guideline throughout, and if that involves some assessment as well, then that has to be part of that guideline."

This obviously affects many people personally, as you say, not least myself, as someone living in the bosom of Toronto. I think one cannot ignore it and therefore that is why we said, and said fairly strongly, it has to be dealt with and has to be part of this overall rationalization process.

Mrs O'Neill: Even though almost four years has passed, the mandatory is not mandatory at this moment, in your mind. Are you saying that?

Dr Macdonald: No, I am saying that even after this interval of time, as I think of our report and what we said and why we said it, I would not be tempted to change our words.

Mrs O'Neill: A final question, if I may. You did suggest that there was need for educational research. Could you, just in your wisdom, give us three or four areas which you would suggest may be priorities where you see research truly lacking?

I think when we were studying the situation of, what shall we say, students who do not complete school in one continuum, we found there were very few data, and certainly very few data on the social aspects of students and who came to school when and how long they stayed. When we started to go through the repertoire, it was pretty sparse. I am just wondering what areas you see as needing further research, if you could give us two or three or four.

1520

Dr Macdonald: I like the one you have just been speaking about, in that as long as we are talking about education we are talking about human development and as long as we are talking about human development we want to know what the constituency is. I know some of these things are going on at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and elsewhere, but often they do not seem to come into focus. It was always my experience when I was in the public service that it was very difficult to harness good external research to the kinds of requirements that governments and policymakers had.

To take an example, if we believe in the educational system and human development, it is

terribly important to know why people drop out. Many may drop out for very cogent, logical reasons, and that should be fine, but many for a variety of other reasons. Is it some shortcoming in the school system? Is it a failure to enable them to recognize the concept of opportunity? Is it that family or other human burdens are so great that they cannot cope? We read over and over again about that one. I do not think we know enough about that.

Related to that, I think we need to know much more about the real way of making information technology effective. It is so easy to generalize. People say, "the computer, the new technology" and this and that, but what does that really mean in terms of not just the strict sense of instruction, but again the sense of education, that is to say, turning people on to new interests, to new horizons?

I am reacting rather spontaneously to your question here, but if we were deciding it right now, I would say let's find out really what is going on about dropouts and why and let's find out what really works and does not by way of educational technology because, of course, that is a bottomless pit, too, and comes back to the question of financing. If that stuff is not any good or is not having much impact, then that money could be spent an awful lot better in human ways, or maybe even in traditional ways.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for touching base and bringing us up to date on those recommendations.

Mr Keyes: Thank you very much. Dr Macdonald, it was a pleasure to listen to your presentation. I have not had that opportunity before. Looking at the one area, because we are talking about financing of education, I am addressing the section of your report from pages 44 to 50, or thereabouts, on the alternate funding models. I wonder if we might spend a little time on that this afternoon for a variety of reasons.

When you looked at that you were, I assume, looking at the context of what existed in 1984. That is now five years ago. Quite significant changes have taken place in those five years. I think of the farm property tax rebate which changed because of inequity there and separating the residents from the rest of the farm, the buildings; and taxing, whether it be the same on that property as any other individual; and the changes in general legislative grants and so on.

You studied three of the options and then said that the preferred one was the new personal income tax. Have you had a chance to think now for five years of the changes that have been made

and whether or not you would still hold out for that fourth and preferred option of the educational tax on personal income, or have we made so many changes in the other three options you looked at.

Look at page 47 and your option C, where the general legislative grants return to 60 per cent, commercial-industrial assessment to 22 per cent, and residential and farm to 18 per cent. As we have come closer to that would that be a reasonable option or would you still hold as strong an argument for the personal income tax approach and dispensing with residential and farm?

I think we have made major corrections particularly for the farming community. You may not agree, but farmers do not agree it has gone far enough. We made fair changes there. We want to look at the whole complex of your models and how you might view them five years later.

Dr Macdonald: I appreciate your point and it is very interesting, because we really had in our minds simultaneously two variables. There was the proportion of the distribution of funding between the province and the municipality on the one hand, the magic 60 per cent, the dropoff from it, the recommendation to get back to it, and there was the principle of moving from the property tax to the income tax and our educationally based income tax that we suggested.

Now, obviously, to the extent that one moves back up towards the 60 per cent or beyond it, one moves more and more into the provincial tax system, which is more progressive than the municipal. Therefore, the overall balance shifts in the direction of more progressivity. Certainly that was something we wanted to see happen. We wanted to see a movement back in the direction of 60 per cent in one manner or another.

But if we arrived there, I think we would still believe that we should do even more by way of relieving the property tax, particularly in terms of the total equity equation. That is to say, particularly if market value assessment goes ahead, at the end of the day it will still be true that the total bills will still be there for the public programs that have to be financed, but the equity question will assume even more importance because then you are going to have property taxes in many instances escalating and the regressivity factor becoming even more important and, therefore, moving to more progressive tax fields in turn is more important.

Whereas you say quite properly that in the intervening five years from the base upon which

our arguments were founded there has been some improvement, on the other hand, I think you can argue that there have been other things—and certainly the market value reassessment would be one that is imminent—that are on the other side of the ledger. Therefore, I would think—obviously I cannot speak for all the members of the committee, but certainly speaking for myself and for the spirit of what we believed at that time—that we would still think this is an important consideration to follow.

As I said to Mr Johnston's question earlier, at the very least, it should be seriously debated and discussed and not sort of hidden away in the closet. It may not, as you say, and there may be good and valid reasons why I or others could be persuaded that the improvements have been sufficient, but I think we have to ask that question, debate it and consider it. Unless something persuaded me to the contrary, I would say we still would go with our preferred system.

Mr Keyes: With the personal income tax.

Dr Macdonald: Yes.

Mr Keyes: I likewise could be persuaded to one or the other. It is hard to move away from it. But I see an area such as our own community of Kingston which is now recognized as the second most attractive retirement home in Canada, second only to Victoria, and I look at the people who retired there on their fixed incomes, pensions, whether they were from universities, many of them, or the military, and bought condominiums, which 10 years ago did not exist in our community, but now they do.

The tax base there, using property tax, has put them in an almost untenable position. They moved into them knowing what they could afford, and now they have found, under market value assessment, that those places have more than tripled in value in five to seven years. So the taxes that they knew and had projected would be affordable are now almost beyond their means. I am not putting them down, but it shows the equity factor does not exist, because the market value assessment on condominiums has increased so significantly beyond that of the regular single-family home, or apartment if it is such, that it becomes a real problem, whereas if it were based on a personal income tax thing, it would be—

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Mr Mahoney: It is a nice problem to have.

Mr Keyes: Yes and no.

Mr Mahoney: Life is tough.

Mr Keyes: Are you going to sell the home you thought you were going to be able to afford to live in and you cannot afford to live in it any longer, so you are forced to sell it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: How many times do you have to move retirement homes?

Mr Keyes: That is right.

The Chairman: Mr Mahoney, you leave Mr Keyes alone. They can continue with this conversation all afternoon. I agree completely with them, and I think it was Professor Macdonald who used the word "regressivity" in connection with market value assessment. I would just like to point that out for the committee.

Mr Mahoney: Fairness and equity.

The Chairman: But they were not used in context with market value assessment. Mr Keyes, did you want to—

Mr Keyes: I just wanted to get Dr Macdonald's comments on it. So you would personally hold to the concept that you preferred?

Dr Macdonald: Yes, and as you can imagine, with the people we had on that commission, I am still amazed at the extent of unanimity we got. People came from very different backgrounds and had very different, strong, strong feelings. We had one minor qualification from Dr Fyfe. I guess we spent more time on this single section than anything else and I remember we had long, long, tough arguments on it and came to that view.

Mr Keyes: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: I did say we had a final questioner, but as soon as those words left my mouth, of course, there was always one more.

Mr Kozyra: I apologize if I am protracting this, but it is such a rare opportunity, if you will indulge me a few more minutes. After two years here I still have not found the big picture, whether it is for finance or what have you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We've noticed.

Mr Kozyra: I do not care if it obvious. Let me try to put it in terms of this funding and so on, as I see it, and perhaps you could correct it. At the moment, education takes about one sixth of the provincial budget and health about one third. Some projections indicate that if health expenditures go unchecked or uncontrolled, in 10 years they may rise to 50 per cent of the total budget, thereby putting an inordinate squeeze on the others.

I am wondering if this relates to some of the thinking—because as backbenchers I am not sure we are let in on all the thinking—but just your

attitude on whether that relates to some of the thinking behind what is perceived as a shift from the provincial involvement in funding towards the municipal funding, thereby still maintaining education as one of the top priorities with its large share, but not necessarily the same share from the province in looking ahead to what may happen to some other areas, specifically health.

Dr Macdonald: I think it is quite clear that the kinds of competition for the public purse will only be greater, not less. Take two examples that are very much larger in the scheme of things than even three and a half years ago when we reported, or five years ago when we started: day care and the environment.

The equation is so much more complicated now and that is the reason why, in the things I said at the beginning, it worries me so much if there is what I feel to be unfair criticism or denigration or unreasoned criticism of the school system. It is so important, from the point of view of what people believe and what they are willing to pay for, that they have the truth or at least a fair representation. It always worries me and bothers me that so often there is the litany of the horror stories. I tried to illustrate in my opening remarks how many important things go on by way of good teaching and good, responsible educational contributions.

Perhaps we come back to Mr Johnston's point about accountability as well. I think in every respect of public finance, the public is going to be more and more insistent upon knowing that it is getting value for money. There is a big difference between saying, "We believe in education and we are prepared to pay for it because it is important not only to children but to society and the economy as a whole, but we want to make sure we are getting our money's worth."

In that way we surely have to find a means—and this is much more in your realm as politically responsible people perhaps than mine—of suggesting how one can find ways, between the public and the educators, of dealing with things that are not good value for money and getting rid of them, as well as supporting the things that are. I would say that is a very high priority as well among the other priorities I have mentioned.

Mr Kozyra: If I could, I would like to share two very brief anecdotes that relate to two subjects we touched on, education versus occupational preparation.

A long time ago I read some science fiction, either Asimov or Bradbury, about a young person in a futuristic society going through a

whole battery of tests that were skill-specific. He or she, I forget now, kept failing and got this real sense of depression and failure, because there was something in his or her makeup that just did not fit the mould. At the conclusion of a battery of tests, when that person felt a total failure and was left in this room, in came some visitors or what have you and informed him or her, all depressed, that he or she was one of the select few—and maybe this is an educational academic conceit—who was a free thinker and was destined for leadership. In some way it relates to this kind of occupational versus other preparation.

The other was on adult education. Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I had the good fortune of being general manager of the Canadian Summer Games in Thunder Bay. That is kind of a Canadian equivalent of the Olympics. When we came to choose our chairmen of committees, we recruited for about 160 and we went to leaders in the community and once they had been given a preview of what they might be involved in and so on, interestingly enough—and they came from all walks of life and a lot of different professions—most chose something different from the direct profession or vocation they were in. They almost all chose an avocation-type, once-in-a-lifetime fantasy opportunity.

The amazing thing was not only that just about everyone who was there that evening chose to be chairman of a specific committee, but that people chose something different from what they were involved in and in the final analysis, three or four years later, almost invariably they did extremely well; the percentage is very high. They just seemed to flower with that opportunity to try something different as a new facet of their involvement. I thought it related to this opportunity to branch out and so on.

Dr Macdonald: Another very good example.

Mr Keyes: Maybe we should do that with the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

Mr Kozyra: I think we should do that with a lot of things.

Dr Macdonald: It happens every four years at election time.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wanted to say that imitation is the greatest form either of flattery or admiration. I guess you already know that your recommendation 17 regarding payments in lieu of is being picked up by several other reports. I really hope that that one comes to pass, but that is an aside.

I have what I consider two small questions. On cottage recreational properties, we were told yesterday there are nine classes of tax you would like to make, or 10 classes I guess. You just hinted at part of my concern about that, though, in that there are so many new pressures now particularly in the environment on those kinds of properties. I always have been rather hesitant about this recommendation of yours and I am wondering if you want to try to convince me that this is really the way we should go, even though it is four years later and things have changed in cottage country.

Dr Macdonald: On the cottager issue, you are saying?

Mrs O'Neill: Yes. You did mention those people in your opening remarks.

Dr Macdonald: I remember when we met with the officials from the assessment division of the Ministry of Revenue and others, and everyone tried to frighten us away from this one. I know there are quite respectable and legitimate technical problems in its way, but as I look at the change in the province in the last four years, I would say that recognizing this problem and trying to do something about it is perhaps even more important today than it was four years ago.

1540

Mrs O'Neill: Why do you say that?

Dr Macdonald: Because I think the changes in demography are such that the cottagers are coming under greater and greater pressure, even to the extent that a lot of that part of the tradition of provincial life could well be endangered, and I think it is a value which we should not lose. I think it is important to address that one.

Mrs O'Neill: Final question: comprehensive audit. Do you think there is any role for it in our relations with school boards and the Ministry of Education?

Dr Macdonald: Are you speaking of the Ministry of Education now as part of the whole evaluation process and so on?

Mrs O'Neill: You may or may not know they are doing a lot more monitoring now of how school boards spend their moneys. It is not yet to the level of a comprehensive audit, however.

Dr Macdonald: Again, I go back to the remarks I made a few minutes ago, that I do not think it is a matter of presuming that things are being done improperly, but rather it is a matter of building an environment in which the public has confidence that someone at least is looking at the overall system and providing some satisfaction

that it is being done properly. Otherwise, you get the frustration and the inability of people to feel that they have any way of being reassured about it. Again, I do not think this is an easy thing nor do I think it is by any means a perfect solution, but yes, I would say we should put some real effort into comprehensive audits.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Should it be an independent group? I worry about the ministry, which already has all these powers of unilateral determination in its hands, to then use this as a weapon in the battle around where the bucks should be coming. Are we not better to establish some kind of independent audit system, if we are going that route, which can be used by people for that kind of accountability but cannot be used as a pressure mechanism by the ministry?

Mrs O'Neill: No doubt we will discuss this further—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was just asking Dr Macdonald if he thought—

Mrs O'Neill: I think we likely will, because I do think value for the dollar, which of course is the basic principle of comprehensive auditing, is something that, somehow or other in the course of the next few weeks, we are going to have to come to grips with in some shape or form.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree with you. I am sure we will, but I am wondering if you think it should be part of the ministry's function in terms of its purview and responsibility—and that raises all sorts of accountability questions—or whether it should be independent.

Dr Macdonald: I was just going to go on and put a footnote on that. The longer I live and the more things I have been involved in, the more I am impressed by the fact that the independent outside view is pretty important to have. Now, it has to be intelligent and informed. You cannot have someone coming in with a sledgehammer. I think of my experience as president of York University. There were times when I would get mad if board members would say: "Why are you doing this? Why do you do that?" But then you would cool off and go away and think about it. It affects your thinking, because everyone becomes a captive of what they are doing, obviously.

So I think that where you have the heavy weight of the bureaucracy at Queen's Park and you have education, like many things, having become a rather highly technical, specialized, self-fulfilling activity, I would like to see a little of this evaluation process and auditing process be external as well as internal. Perhaps it involves a mix; I do not know. I could not pretend for a

minute that I have given any extended thought to this, but as a principle, I hope you might think about that or look at it.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you have internal-external at the university level?

Mr R. F. Johnston: They have just started with the external stuff.

Dr Macdonald: Just started, from the point of view of the Provincial Auditor.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The fascinating public policy side of this is the difference, of course, between a board of a university like Trent, which just underwent one this last year, and an elected group of councillors. It is a very interesting change in terms of when the province should see itself as the auditor rather than some intermediary of some sort.

Sorry, Mrs Cunningham. I did not have a question, but I jumped in there.

The Chairman: Before we go to Mrs Cunningham, I have two brief announcements. One is that we will be joined tomorrow morning by Ken Nelson, who is the state representative from the House of Representatives in Minnesota. He is, I believe, the chair of the education and finance committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is room over here. There is no problem.

The Chairman: Actually, I think he is going to take Professor Macdonald's place over on the witness stand.

Tomorrow morning, our schedule will be as follows: 10 o'clock, the Toronto and Area Council of Women; then at 10:30, J. Barabas, an individual presentation; and then at 10:45, Representative Ken Nelson. That is just for your own information.

The second one is that the clerk is finalizing travel arrangements, so if you do have any changes, please let him know, because I think he plans to book the tickets tomorrow and have them available for us on Thursday.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: I did not take notes when Bernard was speaking about this this morning, but he made some reference to New York state and a range of funding from about \$1,000 per student up to \$7,000 a student or something.

Mrs O'Neill: The 69 school boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If it is possible, if that source he used is easily retrievable, I wonder whether we might have that before we meet the representative tomorrow so we have a sense of

how New York operates. It would be useful if that is around.

The Chairman: I do not know how readily available that information is and in what detail.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If it is not easy to get, the ministry should just forget it; but if the ministry people can lay their hands on it, great.

The Chairman: Dr Bob would like to make a comment.

Dr Gardner: There are some things that we have in the shop. There is a kind of survey of education finance in the different states that gives some sense of proportional divisions between local, state and federal funding. It would be easy to get a little crib sheet of that; much more detailed than that would be problematic by tomorrow.

I think what Dr Shapiro was referring to was that in many of the American states the number of school boards is much larger than here and extremely complicated. When we were in California representing the committee's interests—

Mr Mahoney: You had to bring that up.

Interjections.

Dr Gardner: —that very difficult trip, we found there would be four or five elementary school boards that would then be funnelling into one secondary school board. It was hugely complicated and the directors of them were always going crazy on the administrative side.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We had better go down and check this out.

Mrs O'Neill: Why do you not go to Newfoundland, Richard? It is just like Newfoundland.

Dr Gardner: No, Newfoundland is much simpler.

Interjections.

Mr Mahoney: How did we fall apart here?

Mr R. F. Johnston: The chair loses control regularly. Where is the vice-chair when we need him?

1550

The Chairman: Dr Gardner will make a few copies for tomorrow since it might be difficult for the ministry to get that. It might be problematic, to use Mr Johnston's favourite word, for the ministry to provide that by tomorrow. If you do have details readily available that you can whip up, fine, but otherwise we will rely on the précis Bob has; and thank you for that.

I have now resumed control. See how boring it is? I am not going to say, "Speaking of boring," Mrs Cunningham?

Mrs Cunningham: It seems like so long ago, 1985, when you did this, does it not? But I was a trustee in the London board at that time and we hopefully made some impact as well as—

Dr Macdonald: I remember our visit and discussions.

Mrs Cunningham: A lot. There was a lot that went on.

Mr Mahoney: That was a good year.

Mrs Cunningham: It was. I was chairman, actually.

Just an observation on audit: There are other ministries looking at audits. I am now talking about the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities that have for the last five years as a practice used outside consultants even in developing their lines of inquiry, what they are looking for. It would be more usual for Education to move in that direction than for it not to. It would be strange to see them in these times say they were going to do an internal comprehensive audit without using outside evaluators. That is just in my experience. I would find that strange. I do not know if it is even a question.

The other observation, looking at the American school boards: That will be interesting, will it not? If any of us were to go to any state and say that we had 2,000 students or 4,000 students or 40,000 students, they cannot believe that there would be one board, with the size of the city of Kingston, Ottawa, London or Scarborough; they could not believe we could manage such a thing. When you look at what they are doing in the United States, the questions will be most enlightening.

Anyway, I am going to pick up on a comment you made, and I may or may not be in line with what has happened so far, but you talked about accountability and what the taxpayers are getting for their money. The normal amount of criticism is out there, as it has been in the past and probably will be in the future. I was wondering exactly what you were getting at and whether you have kept in touch with the results of recommendations 11 and 12. I am looking at the short form, where you are talking about the Ministry of Education evaluation, of the ministry itself, and where you talk in 12 about the comprehensive evaluation of the systems, talking about personnel and schools. I remember us having to do that, and I am just wondering if you have kept in touch

with what happened or what went into that. Were those the kinds of accountability recommendations you were looking at?

Dr Macdonald: That is what we were looking at. I have not been in touch with what has transpired subsequently.

Mrs Cunningham: I am just curious to know what happened with recommendation 11, even though I know that earlier today Dr Shapiro said we would get a bigger paragraph on that. That would be the ministry itself; I would be curious to see about that. I do think we will get something specific about recommendation 12.

I was wondering what your opinion was, therefore, on some of the more recent comments and suggestions around student evaluation as a means of—to go back to your word—accountability and how systems are working. I think it has changed again; it has risen again, but changed again rather significantly in the last five years with regard to accountability, especially going back to secondary schools as it relates to students going on to university, and looking at either province-wide examinations or entrance examinations for universities, however you want to put.

You being a former president, I am just wondering if you have any opinion on that as far as accountability downwards to the school system. What do you think about that?

Dr Macdonald: As far as universities are concerned, the interesting thing now, and I guess the greater concern I have now, is not the people who get in, but the people who do not get in. I keep drawing up my little list of people I know who have done well, from former premiers of the province down, who would not get into university today. I was listening on the radio the other day to an old student of mine, one of the really outstanding legal stars of the province, except I remember him when he was my student at the University of Toronto and how he just barely scraped in—that was 25 years ago—and barely got out. He has done awfully well. You all know his name.

We are talking with Yvonne O'Neill earlier about the question of research. I would really like to see some serious consideration of this paradox of those who say how awful the system has become compared with the standards that now apply to universities and the difficulty people have to meet to get in, because it does not seem to come together.

From the point of view of evaluation, I mentioned earlier in my opening remarks, I think before you came in, that we have to be very

careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. It is not proper and it is not correct to talk about a great decline in the school system. It is proper to talk about specific kinds of problems, one of which is the spoken and written word, to focus on those things and stop this business of damning the whole school system. It is not helpful and it is not meaningful to focus on what is wrong. In order to do that, we have to be very careful, very responsible and very research-specific to know what it is and evaluate those things and do evaluation again, not from the point of view of denigration but from the point of view of how to make changes and having means and specific means of making changes and improvements.

Mrs Cunningham: A final question, I suppose more global. You mentioned earlier the gains that had been made since this report. I always look at this statistic, because I have never understood it and most of us have lived with it; that is, the share of educational funding per province in Canada and how the different provinces deliver. It is hard to believe, if you take a look at it without having read all the backup stuff, that Ontario is the lowest. It is just the way we are structured, I suppose. In looking at all of those things, you still came up with the number 60 per cent, which was based on—

Dr Macdonald: The 60.

Mrs Cunningham: Yes. You must have had some very strong reasons for saying that, having looked at the depth of your research around what is happening across Canada. I really hang my hat on this one and have for five years: "But he still says 60 per cent." I would have liked for you to have said 90 per cent or 80 per cent and rebuild the whole system. Where I come from, for the value of education, I just think it should be a very big provincial responsibility. But you said 60 and you are still saying 60.

Dr Macdonald: To tell you the truth, I remember saying to the committee, partly on provocation and partly in real belief, early on when we got into this, that I would like to see 80-20, because there should be some local responsibility but the real burden should be there—I have got away, by the way, from this whole business about the income tax thing, if we had a sharing, say, of that proportion—which would say on the one hand, as you said, that it is an overall public responsibility that should be the province's. On the other hand, you do not want to have it all the way down at Queen's Park without any local sense of participation or concern. How we then got back to 60, I am sorry to have to tell

you, was by no magic or no design whatsoever. It seemed reasonable.

The Chairman: A nice number.

Dr Macdonald: It was a number that had been there once; it seemed, maybe in this instance, that we were doing something we should not do as a technical committee and I do not think we really did in other instances, perhaps being a little political in saying, "It's a number that is attainable and people can live with." There would be different views, and like you I would go much further in the other direction toward the higher amount for the province, but that was just a figure we seemed to feel had become part of the folklore of the educational financing.

1600

Mrs Cunningham: I am enjoying your responses here. It helps some of us, I think, as we go out and try to explain formulas across this province. We get asked the same question. I can explain general welfare and child care, because it is 80-20 and we have a tremendous impact on how the money is spent and whom it goes to and how they spend it. I feel we should have that kind of impact provincially, because we put 80 per cent of the bucks there, and 20 per cent from local municipalities, and they have certain priorities they therefore put forth, and I like that.

But in education, we are now looking at less than 50 per cent. Somebody said 37 or 39 per cent to me the other day, one of the ministry people. Is that correct? Is that the commitment provincially of the education dollar?

Mrs O'Neill: It depends what you are including.

Mrs Cunningham: Well, it was a ministry figure.

Mr Mahoney: It is 55 per cent of approved costs.

Mrs Cunningham: I see. So looking at the change in the ceiling—

Mr Keyes: It is 42 of approved.

Mrs Cunningham: Well, there we go: 55, 42, and I heard 37, all from the province.

Interjection.

Mrs Cunningham: I do not really care, Steve, do you? The point is that it is not 60.

Mr Mahoney: I have a feeling you do care.

Mrs Cunningham: No, I mean about the number. It is hard to explain to the public. The point is that it is not 60, and then they tell us, "We'll tell you what we're going to teach, because in this board, 67 per cent of the buck we're spending or 71 per cent—you can just fly

back to Queen's Park and tell them that we'll tell them what we're teaching in science."

We cannot have it all ways as provincial politicians. What do you recommend we say if we are still at 42 or 55, whatever? It is certainly not even near 80 per cent. I feel fairly confident in going into social programs and saying, "This is the direction because we're spending 80 per cent," but I do not feel one bit confident walking into school boards in this province and having very strong opinions on heritage language at all when we are forking out less than 50 per cent of the buck.

In fact, I tell them: "Do it the way you want. See what they do to you." That is what I say. I am just wondering what you feel about what I just said. Be careful, although I am the one who will lose my seat—big deal—not you.

Dr Macdonald: I think you said it earlier; you cannot have it both ways. The less the province provides, the less it can expect to have the strong voice in curriculum, in a whole number of things that go on within the school. The 60-40 issue is the dilemma that everyone is wrestling with. Everyone recognizes that from the point of view of curriculum, from the point of view of overall educational process, the province should be the leader. Indeed, people say in a federal country like Canada the federal government should be the leader. You have that kind of argument, that it should be uniform, it should be centrally directed.

On the other hand, over and over again, for a whole number of reasons, we have said there should be and we want to have a local feeling of everything from responsibility to pride about their local schools, and I think that is important. So you come down with 60-40, which I guess is

like 51 per cent in a takeover or something. The province has a healthy enough majority to be entitled to have the final say, but the local initiative and the local responsibility is still there as well. That is the only logic I see in that.

Mr Mahoney: I guess the only thing we know for sure is that it is 100 per cent funded by the taxpayer.

The Chairman: That is right. It is a matter of which pocket it is going to come out of.

Professor Macdonald, I would very much like to thank you, on behalf of the committee and the committee members, for your excellent presentation today and for giving us an insight into some of the background information surrounding your recommendations and where you see them fitting into the education system in 1989.

Dr Macdonald: I thank you very much for two reasons. First, I do not get opportunities like this very often any more, so I hope you will forgive my indulgence in rambling about a few things; and second, I learned from Dick Johnston that the backbenchers' hockey team is still going. Mr Furlong, is that true?

Mr Furlong: It was last year.

Dr Macdonald: Ever since my old friend Eddie Sargent disappeared from Queen's Park, our annual encounter went by the wayside; so perhaps we can resume.

Mr Furlong: I think it would be a great idea.

The Chairman: The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. As a courtesy to our presenters, we will start on time.

The committee adjourned at 1605.

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday 13 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday 13 September 1989

The committee met at 1007 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open up the proceedings as the select committee on education continues to look at the financing of both the elementary and secondary school system in Ontario, particularly relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

We are pleased to have as our first group today the Toronto and Area Council of Women. Come forward, please. If your colleagues would like to come forward as well, they are welcome to join you at the table. Welcome to our committee. We are very much looking forward to having your input and you might be pleased to know that you are the first of our presenters in our public hearings. So we feel that you will have something very valid to say to us. Begin by introducing yourself for the purposes of Hansard.

TORONTO AND AREA COUNCIL OF WOMEN

Mrs McHoull: My name is Donna McHoull and I am president this year of the Toronto and Area Council of Women. On my left is Dorothy Robertson, who is convener of our economics and environment committee, and on her left is my staunch adviser, supporter and general help, the past president, Mary Lemyre.

First of all, I would like to ask how many committee members are, or have been, school-teachers?

Mr Mahoney: Most of them. You should ask how many have not. There are just the two of us. The rest of them have been teachers.

The Chairman: We have quite a few on our committee, actually.

Mr Mahoney: Do not hold that against them.

Mrs McHoull: No, I will certainly not hold it against them. I will be looking to them for sympathy.

Mr Furlong: Very well put.

The Chairman: Did you say for sympathy or with sympathy?

Mrs McHoull: For sympathy.

I have left with your clerk, Mr Brown, some of the pamphlets of the Toronto and Area Council of Women. Most folks do not like to tell their age, but this grand old lady will be 100 years old in 1993. We are very proud of all that she has done for women and for the community, the province and the nation.

I would like to point out that our organization has 3,000 members from 33 affiliates representing women from cultural, business, religious and ethnic groups. The council operates on four levels: local, provincial, national and international. The International Council of Women is composed of national councils in over 70 countries and on every continent.

The Toronto council is not government-funded. The constitution of our local allows for proceeds from one money-raising event a year. Our budget is dependent on annual fees per member.

I am a comparatively new member. My affiliate is the Consumers' Association of Canada. I am a retired teacher with the Toronto board. I grew up in Toronto. I attended Winchester Public School, North Toronto Collegiate, Victoria College at University of Toronto and received my high school teacher's diploma from the Ontario College of Education. I survived the strictures of the Depression and saw university classmates go overseas to the Second World War, many of whom did not return. My teaching was all done at Toronto high schools.

Now I am living on a fixed retirement income, with tax increases far exceeding pension indexing. A goods and services tax is in the offing. The realty tax on my home increased in June for the next four instalments by \$122 each instalment. A \$100 rebate is available to those seniors eligible. There is no seniors' deduction on utility bills and taxes. I realize that you are aware of these facts, but as a teacher I am accustomed to work from a solid base of what the class is supposed to know.

Of equal or perhaps even greater concern than the grand total of taxes taken—except to someone like Harold Ballard perhaps—is the use and accountability of those moneys by the government bodies handling them.

Chatelaine magazine, in the September issue, has the first of a series of three articles by Rona

Maynard on Canadian education, asking "Is it slipping?" It is an assessment study of problems plaguing our schools. A pamphlet enclosed with my tax bill shows that 53.3 cents of Toronto's tax dollar goes to schools to support our share of the system's failure. Maynard, in the second article, deals with the changing social structures that are putting stress on the teachers. Part 3 will deal with what we may expect in the future. I hope it will suggest some viable remedies.

I must complain that your timing was very bad for this meeting. First of all, you landed it in the middle of the subway and bus difficulty, which made it very hard for some of us to get here.

Second, you planned it the day after the general meeting that I was holding with my organization to get our views and support for what I am saying this morning. As a result, I was unable to Xerox and give you the full text of what I am saying. What you have is a very short résumé of what I was able to do. I will provide a full copy within a very few days of what I am actually saying, along with what you are looking at.

I do have problems with present school financing. Students regard "free" books as their right and cannot accept that their parents pay for them indirectly in their taxes. I have handled grant books and dealt with lost books, books with pages torn out, illustrations vandalized and others made useless with every obscene expression in the teenage vocabulary.

My parents bought and paid for my texts, usually good second-hand ones, in the 1930s Depression and I had to take care of them to be able to resell—in 1989, read "recycle"—to help buy the next year's books. If this responsibility were given back to parents, they would be aware of how their money is spent and surely show more concern about how the books are used. Would this not relieve some of the provincial expenditure?

I taught in a school equipped with thousands of dollars' worth of things like projectors and VCRs, all the equipment needed to enrich lessons in every subject. A technician had a well-furnished classroom. On request, he ordered the material from the Toronto Board of Education, set it up and booked the class into his schedule. All I had to do was arrive on time and keep order.

Suddenly, there was no full-time technician. One of the former technicians serviced the equipment for five high schools on a rotating basis. Finally, the equipment was stored in a locked room because it was either broken or so

technically difficult that it could not be used by the average classroom teacher. The part-time technician who had been coming around retired and was not replaced. That was a shocking outlay of money, in my estimation.

There is a rumour that someone has suggested a 12-month school year. It certainly was not someone who has taught summer school during July and August heat waves. I asked the architect who installed the heating system at North Toronto Collegiate about air-conditioning and he estimated that it would take over \$1 billion to put air-conditioning in the buildings already built, some of considerable age.

I doubt that the idea would be popular with two working parents who have to juggle their own holidays, let alone work around those of three or four offspring. There are a great many students who count on summer jobs during their summer holidays for extra spending money. Believe me, McDonald's was in dire straits last week when school opened.

On last evening's news it was announced that \$1.4 million will be spent by the federal government on drug education in our schools. There is an attitude among teenagers and young people that I have encountered too many times to be hopeful of success in this effort. The attitude is: "I don't need to worry; that happens to other people, not me. "I am a good driver. Accidents happen to people who are stupid." "Other people get cancer from smoking, but I won't." "I'm not an alcoholic because I drink only beer." I will not quote to you what some of them said about sex.

As well, there is a counter culture that is glorified in the media. Violence is macho; drinking people are the ones who are having the fun; the best car is the fastest car. Rona Maynard points out that parents want their children to be independent and self-assertive, to have free choice. A great deal of money has been spent already in the United States and Canada educating people about AIDS, but the reports are coming in regularly that AIDS is not receding, but increasing.

I have many concerns for the future. One is the heritage languages program. This, I might add, I received from my council meeting yesterday. That is one reason it is not Xeroxed for your copy. The information I was given is that \$11 million was given last year to implement this one program in Ontario. When it was decided, 20 years ago, that students could earn the secondary school diplomas with the required number of credits in the subject of their own choice, languages were the first to go into steady decline.

Greek and Latin were taken by only the few opting for university courses requiring them. French dwindled away to near nonexistence.

The September Mississauga Roman Catholic Separate School Board brochure left at my door says it has six elementary French-language schools and one secondary French-language school, so who is demanding the heritage classes in school?

1020

Experience proves that students do not choose a second or third language of their own accord. There are six ethnic affiliates in the Ontario Provincial Council of Women and when expressions of opinion were sought from them on this question, they insisted unequivocally that public schools teach their children, the ethnic children, to be good Canadians and leave the ethnic culture, pride and mother tongue to the family and to their church.

As a question on the side, by the way, I would like to know how the heritage languages program incentive funds are going to be allocated to the numerous dialects of most of the mother tongues. How will agreement be reached among the many religious groups? I had one class with several Chinese students registered the first day of school. On the second day, two Korean students were assigned to the same class. They walked in, took one look at the Chinese students and walked out. They refused to sit in the same room with the Chinese students.

Another concern I have is illiteracy. Several volunteers in our organization are helping individuals regularly on a one-to-one basis. A 1987 study revealed that in one in five Canadians cannot read or write. On 11 September, the day before yesterday, the CBC devoted its air time from 12 noon to 2 pm to discussion and interviews on illiteracy. A drama has been presented for several days at Harbourfront—the last showing was Monday night—to draw attention to the problems an illiterate person must face in daily life. Many illiterate people hide their difficulty. Of the five million Canadians who cannot read or write, one third say they graduated from high school.

Another question I have is, why are schools expected to handle instruction in family living, racism, ethics, morals, AIDS, drug addiction, child abuse, even driving a car? The only answer I have to offer you is that students are a captive audience. School is the only place they are required by law to be.

I have a couple of suggestions. The first one is dealing with the dropouts. Extend the exchange

program that puts students in the workplace for training periods. Since honey attracts more flies than vinegar, make it a reward for achievement in class, which would be similar to incentives for promotion in the workplace. Give the student a chance to learn what real working life is about. It could be salutary. It certainly is an opportunity to build up a résumé for job applications. Satisfactory performance might earn credits towards graduation diploma. Anyone choosing the drop-out route would at least have some experience with which to make the decision.

The second suggestion I have is in the form of a challenge. The new buzzwords at all levels when discussing education are "illiteracy" and "malnutrition." It is common knowledge that children come to school without proper breakfast and have little or no information about nutrition. Bring back the home economics classes. These were dropped some years ago because they were not considered to be academic. Instead of a Band-Aid effort to provide cafeteria meals, rotate both boys and girls through cooking lessons to prepare the food they should be eating and then let them eat it. If seven-year-olds can attend the Cordon Bleu school for chefs in Paris, why not give our young people an opportunity to learn there is something besides frozen dinners and junk food?

In Coles bookstore last Saturday, I saw two junior cookbooks that contained basic kitchen techniques as well as simple, child-appealing recipes. This training in a daily class would certainly help the working and single mother who does not have time to prepare meals, let alone give cooking demonstrations to her ravenous family.

Where do we go from here? I must admit that, like the rest of the experts, I have 20-20 vision when looking for problems but I am functionally blind when searching for solutions, so I would like to read to you just two short paragraphs from Rona Maynard's first assessment:

"How many more obligations can schools take on? They are so overburdened right now that a British Columbia royal commission, in a report last year, felt moved to warn: 'To expect the school to satisfy all but the most severe social and developmental needs of the young is to weaken, in fundamental ways, its ability to discharge its primary educational objectives. This simply cannot be allowed to happen.'

"But government money for education is tight these days, and vision is in even shorter supply. As an overloaded system races to satisfy the public, hardly anyone is asking what our schools

should teach—and to whom. Unless we confront these issues, we will squander not only our own tax dollars but our children's chances for a secure and satisfying future."

The Chairman: Thank you. Certainly your last comments have come to our committee a number of times; the increasing expectations of the school system to be all things for all people and the overcrowded curriculum. It is something we are trying to grapple with, the same as the school system is. I would just like to make two brief comments.

You mentioned the September issue of *Chate-laine* and the article by Rona Maynard. Our researcher has agreed to get copies of that for our committee, so we should have that later this morning. Thank you for drawing that to our attention.

Mrs McHoull: The September issue, the October issue and the November issue.

The Chairman: So it is the first of a three-month series. Very good. We will certainly keep our researcher's eyes open for those issues.

The second thing: You mentioned that you would send along a copy of your full brief that you presented today.

Mrs McHoull: Yes.

The Chairman: We do have Hansard taking down every single morsel and word that you are saying, so you can save yourself that additional effort and expense. We shall all be provided with a full copy of your remarks.

Thank you very much for your presentation. We have seven or eight minutes for questions. Does anybody have questions?

You have rendered them speechless, or else they are still not quite awake. I have one question myself, before you go, about accountability. You mentioned it earlier on when you talked about the textbooks as being one method. I gather that the reason we went to the universal system of textbooks being provided was the fact that there are a number of people who really cannot afford textbooks. What would you recommend in those situations?

Mrs McHoull: My experience in that case, right in the classroom, was that no student went without proper textbooks. There were funds—they used to call them slush funds; I do not know what they call them today—in every school and the principal had the responsibility, the duty, the right, whatever you want to call it, to make sure that any student who needed them had books. It was done on a very quiet basis. It was not done publicly so that it was a known fact about the

student. Also, the lost and found provided a great many texts. They were kept on a special shelf and sometimes they were handed out to students who needed them.

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The Chairman: Mrs O'Neill also has a question.

Mrs O'Neill: Madam President, I did enjoy your comments. We can certainly see your characteristics in those; doubtless, classes enjoyed many of those ways in which you gain a person's attention and maintain it. I found that much of what you said was true. I certainly know that the more things change the more they stay the same, in many ways. It is a long time since I have been in a classroom in a formal way, certainly at the front of the classroom.

But I would like to suggest that perhaps one area you mentioned is not as dark as you would suggest: the area of home economics, now called family studies. That is one of the areas in which I happen to have done my teaching, and I did find it was very fulfilling; that was in the 1960s.

My daughter, through some means of mirroring my experience, went and got what I consider much better training to do what I did and is now doing it going into the 1990s. She is doing family studies, as it is now called. In her school it is obligatory; this is in the Ottawa-Carleton area, for all grade 7 and 8 students, boys and girls. She has also been extremely deeply involved in pilot projects called breakfast programs, where students from low-income groups are taught that they can put their breakfast in their pocket, literally. That has all been very good for her and I think for the people she has touched as a result.

So I do think there are some very good things happening. I do not think all schools and all school boards are doing them to their very fullest, but there is lots out there in the way of teaching material, everything from music to teaching aids, and the public health councils in the communities in Ontario have also got involved with the schools in that area. I just wanted to put on the record that there are examples in that area if people want to follow them.

Mrs McHoull: I am well aware of the North York work that is being done, because my daughter teaches up there and she also does family studies and leadership and this kind of thing. For that particular thing, I was thinking of the inner-city schools where the complaint is constant that these kids are coming to school improperly nourished; this article says it is Canada-wide. They have not had any breakfast at

all in some cases, and in many cases they turn around and do not have any lunch.

There are numerous Band-Aid solutions that are being tried. A senator in northern Alberta is spending \$2,000 a month taking food to certain schools to feed these children before they go into school. If anything happens to him, what happens to the plan? If they went in and had a home-ec class and learned how to make French toast, had a glass of chocolate milk and a piece of French toast and some fruit, at least they would get a good start on the day. The smallest child, I think, could learn to prepare that and learn something from it.

Mrs O'Neill: This may be something we will have to attend to, simply because some school boards have actually begun to commit public funds to these kinds of programs. We may want to or have to examine that as we proceed in our deliberations.

The Chairman: Thank you. We have two members who have further questions. Since there are only a couple of minutes left, I would ask if you could keep them brief. Mrs Cunningham and Mr Kozyra.

Mrs Cunningham: Thank you very much for your presentation. It was most refreshing. I wish you had been around when the committee looked at the school year deliberations. I share your point of view, at the risk of being described as a person who is not ready to implement something different for the sake of it. You obviously have had many experiences.

There is another area in which you may be of some help to the government, the area of heritage languages. You asked some questions that will be in Hansard. I am not certain that anyone would risk answering them today, because I am not sure anybody thought about them to begin with. So I would urge you and your group to pursue that particular topic and be of some assistance in the implementation, if you feel you can be. I certainly share your questions and have not been able to get answers myself. Any time you get them, I would be most interested in receiving them.

Mr Kozyra: My question is also in the line of the heritage languages. I wonder if you would expand on the rationale for opposing them in the schools. Is it basically that you see the proliferation of so many as unmanageable or squeezing out the core curriculum? What exactly is the real basis of opposition? You mentioned the six ethnic groups in your group, or the people representing them. Were they supportive of your position, and for what reason?

Mrs McHoull: They were the ones who enunciated the position I have given. They have their own schools and churches, and they support these financially, and they are well done. They choose their teachers, they choose the courses; and then the ethnic language is spoken in the home as well. The support is there for that.

Mr Kozyra: They would rather that the emphasis be placed there—

Mrs McHoull: Yes.

Mr Kozyra: —and perhaps some of the funding that is going into the regular school system go to them, to assist them to hold the—

Ms Lemyre: No. They intend to do it strictly on their own. With most of them, their children are grown up. They have paid for their own children's education in their ethnic background and they prefer it to remain that way. They do not see any reason for public funds to be spent on that sort of education, but that it would be better spent on things to teach them to be Canadian citizens, with no stress on their cultural background.

The Chairman: I would like to thank our presenters for coming to us today. You can be very impressed with our research services; they already have for each member a copy of the September issue of *Chatelaine* on our desks. I would like to thank you very much for your contribution to our committee today. We apologize for the timing, but unfortunately the Toronto Transit Commission strike—or slowdown, as it may be called—and your annual meeting were slightly beyond our control, but we are glad you could make it.

Mrs McHoull: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by Joseph Barabas. Could you come forward, please? We have allocated 15 minutes for your presentation, which will include not only any opening comments but hopefully time for some members' questions. I would like to begin by expressing the committee's appreciation for the fact that you adjusted your schedule on two occasions to accommodate our schedule.

If the members would like to give their attention, our next presenter is ready to begin. Members of the government caucus have been very good about being punctual, but now we would like your attention.

JOSEPH BARABAS

Mr Barabas: You may have to excuse me, because I have a bit of a problem hearing with my right ear and I have a tendency at times to shout. So if I am a wee bit loud, please excuse me.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are used to that sort of thing.

The Chairman: We call it debate.

Mr Barabas: The financing of education, the collection of taxes: I have two issues to present to the select committee on education. The first is that education should be taxed by income, not by property or a person's equity. Everyone with an income shall pay an education tax scaled according to his level of income. Property taxes should only be collected to pay for the services rendered to said property, for example, police and fire protection, garbage collection, road and sewer needs, etc. This method of taxation is equitable. The current process of collection is not.

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Income-adjusted taxation balances the system in a way that property taxes never could. It is proportional. Those who are on social programs or are living on a low income or in depressed areas pay less. Those who earn more pay more. Generally, the more education people have the more apt they may be to earn a higher wage. The more money one earns, the more education tax one should pay. Thus, those who have benefited from higher education feed the system which provided for it.

Free education is the right our society gives to all. It is mandatory for those up to the age of 16 years. How one lives has no bearing on this attendance.

Examine two households, each with equal earnings, each having an equal number of children. One lives in a new large house, the other in an old small house. All children receive the same education, yet the first family pays a higher education tax. Clearly, this is not equitable.

On a further extension of this theme, development charges and lot levies are only inflationary measures. Existing housing prices follow the incline of new housing. These levies are a trap in which all first-time owners will be caught. Developers will simply pass on this extra cost.

We need a tax system that is not inundated by a complex system of education financing. Income assessment is less complicated and less easily laundered. It is not a hidden tax. For example, a visible percentage of gross income before exemptions would need to be determined, say two per cent. On an income of \$100,000, the tax would be \$2,000. Pensioners need not be rebated. It eliminates education tax from principal secondary residences, like cottages and other properties. Changing residences midyear would

not affect the tax base except in the event of out-of-province moves. It rewards establishment of life savings, and equity and pride in one's home.

My second proposal today is that education financing distribution should be handled by the provincial government; income taxes collected, then distributed to the county boards according to need. A central collection permits a more equitable distribution of funds.

All children, whether northern, native, urban or rural, all children across the province, would benefit from a more uniform, homogeneous and consistent education regardless of where or how they live.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for a very good presentation. We will start the questioning with Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have two questions to follow your two suggestions. The Macdonald commission, which reported on education finance a number of years ago, did suggest a move away from the personal property tax to a special education tax within the income tax structure, so you are not alone in this kind of suggestion. But there are two questions which follow from it that I would like to raise with you, which are raised by others.

Should there be a role for commercial and industrial assessments? One can argue that the beneficiaries of the education system are in fact the industries and that is one way of accumulating a portion of the money, even if you are taking off the individual home owner's tax.

Mr Barabas: Yes. I merely used the two per cent in my speech. You mentioned residential and industrial. At the present time, there is a mill rate of 34 per cent that they are using in the city of Guelph for residential. For industrial and commercial, it is 39 mills, so you have a different mill rate. As I said, this would have to be determined, whether you wanted to raise it more than two or less than two, or 1.4; I am not going to argue about that. I think there are people who are well qualified who can set that.

Once that is set in place, whether there is inflation or not, the tax that is collected will just follow inflation. You would not have that extra bartering about who gets what or how much we are to collect or how much we are going to raise the assessment for education. I think that pretty well answers the question on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The second question comes to your second point, which is the province-wide collection of all the incomes that will be coming in for the coverage of education

costs. That then begs the question about the role of the local school board, because the principle, of course, is that you have taxation and then you have representation and the two things are linked. If the local school board is not involved in any of the taxation and that is all being done at the provincial level, then in terms of accountability, what is the role of that local board? Is it just going to become a buffer for the provincial government, or is it in fact going to have a role?

Mr Barabas: No, they will play a role. They will play a major role in accounting how much they need, and they will go back to the federal education ministry, which will supply the money for them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Provincial?

Mr Barabas: Provincial; I am sorry. Did I say "federal"?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, you did. Mr Mulroney seems to be making noises about getting involved in that and I hate to encourage him.

Mr Barabas: I am sorry. As you know, education is a provincial responsibility. It can be collected on a federal level on income tax and then turned back to the Ministry of Education. You still have your boards, which are very essential for various different areas.

To have everything equal with this type of change would be impossible. You know it and I know it. There may be a little bit of variance here and there as far as the type of education, but the thing is, you want to have as good an education as you can, whether it is in a depressed area—people in depressed areas sometimes cannot even afford to let industry come in. They say: "Gosh, this is a depressed area. Our school taxes are going to kill us." Once you take that away, that they will not be nailed that heavily for school tax in some depressed areas, industry may even want to move in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: Just before you go, I have one question of my own which follows fairly closely along Mr Johnston's question. It is about the matter of local autonomy. I have a lot of sympathy for the argument of the income tax being used rather than the property tax as a measure of fairness, but one of the difficulties is that you have areas of the province, such as Metropolitan Toronto, where virtually all of the funds now come out of the local property taxes, residential and commercial-industrial. In the case of Metro, how could Metro school boards still have some autonomy for making the

decisions they feel are in the best interests of their area if the province entirely controls the purse-strings? Granted, you have mentioned there is a role for the boards in that they can bring suggestions to the province as to where the money should be deployed and how much money they need, but what kind of guarantees are there that there would be some local autonomy and some recognition that various areas of the province are very different?

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Mr Barabas: I think they can play quite a role. It should not be too much in the education part, but in various other fields—sports, what have you—I think they can play quite a good role.

Mr Villeneuve: I fully agree that the funding has to be looked at in a much different light. School board trustees in the area I represent, very rural, earn somewhere between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year. How are you going to convince your downtown Toronto trustees to take that kind of cut in salary?

Mr Barabas: Just a moment. I never suggested that they take a cut. All I suggested was: How do we collect money for education? Let me point out—I think I still have a few more minutes, Madam Chairman, is that right?

Mr Villeneuve: Sure. It is a good question.

Mr Barabas: This is the taxation calculation for the average-sized one-bedroom apartment. I might just point this out. This was given to me through freedom of information and so on; it took a little bit of time to get. This is the assessment: school tax. They gave me low, average and high. For the low, the assessment was \$7,200, and the school tax was \$405. For the average, the assessment was \$8,400, and the school tax was \$473.25. For the high, the assessment was \$11,200 and the school tax was \$631. When you go to an average-sized two-bedroom apartment, for a low of \$8,400, the school tax is \$473.25. For the average \$10,100 assessment, there was \$569.03 for school tax. On the high, \$12,500 assessment, the school tax is \$704.25.

Two per cent of \$28,000—I was just putting a figure on it—would be \$560. If you look at the average, you are talking \$569.03. If you look at the average on the other one, it is \$473. So when I suggested somewhere around two per cent—I took the figure of two per cent—I was trying to take an average. As far as education costs are concerned, as you well know, education costs are really going up. As has been said by Debra Black of the Toronto Star, To teach one elementary student this year will cost \$3,225. It is slightly

more for the secondary student: \$4,122. With the province paying 50 to 70 per cent of the tab, the local taxpayers pick up the rest.

There are a lot of things that local taxpayers have to always be dishing in on. That is why I came forth with this. But as far as the tax levies for residential and commercial and all that are concerned, that will have to be determined.

Mr Villeneuve: Certainly the government, way back many years ago, realized the inequity in using real estate as the basis for paying the education costs. I think the farm tax rebate was started in agriculture way back many years ago to rebate people in agriculture that portion which was real estate oriented, towards making a living. We know that is there. The problem we probably will have is the division between the very rich boards and those who are in need. How do you divvy up the pie, because the Metro boards are the very wealthy cousins in relation to the boards that are out in the areas I try to represent? I think we have a major stumbling block there in trying to bring equity to the system in that light.

Mr Barabas: You would not do it in one shot; you would slowly kind of bring it up.

Here is another thing to realize. When people are on welfare, they are being given money in a roundabout way to pay for education, and it comes back to education. The money just keeps going round and round and it is an expenditure, as far as I can see it. It is useless expenditure: giving them money for education and getting it back again. There are various different things I could elaborate on had I been given more time.

Mr Villeneuve: Once you figure out the mechanics of how to put it in place without creating too many major problems, please do come back to us.

Mr Barabas: The mechanics are here, as far as I am concerned. On the smaller things that have to be detailed, I do not think it would be too complicated.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It cannot be any more complicated than it is now.

Mr Barabas: Not with the lot levies and everything else they are trying to stick in.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Barabas, for your contribution to our committee today. We appreciate your input.

Mrs McHoull: Could I ask a question, please?

The Chairman: If you would like to take a microphone here, or is this off the record?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman, I think you had better have the rules of how things

operate around here pretty clear. If we are going to bring back people on an ad hoc basis, people make presentations and—

The Chairman: I just wanted to find out if it was a question of logistics about whether you—

Mrs McHoull: You were talking about the Ontario people paying and so on, and the local boards paying. Was it not done on a per capita basis? Ye gods, I kept registers and registers of attendance so that they knew, if a child was away on such and such a day, they got no grant for that day.

The Chairman: Although it is slightly irregular to have a previous presenter come forward with a question to the committee, I think I would be fairly safe in saying that it is on a per capita enrolment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The average daily enrolment is taken. It is one of the factors that is used, yes.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Johnston.

We have an unexpected treat for us today. As I mentioned to the committee yesterday, Representative Ken Nelson from the House of Representatives in Minnesota is going to join us for a few minutes. Representative Nelson is the chairman of the education and finance committee, so he is quite interested in what we are talking about at this particular stage and I think would like to share some comments with us.

KEN NELSON

Representative Nelson: Thank you very much. This is a rare opportunity for me. I will just overview how we in Minnesota finance our K-12, elementary-secondary education system, and also some policy initiatives we have launched that hopefully will deal with some of these questions of equity, accountability and adequacy, as you have listed. And we do not have the answer.

The Chairman: Welcome to the group.

Representative Nelson: I thought I could perhaps spend my time instead talking about the Twins and Blue Jays game of yesterday, but you might not like to hear that.

The Chairman: I think we have heard enough of this presentation. I think it is time to adjourn for lunch.

Representative Nelson: If I could briefly step through how we finance education in Minnesota, it might trigger some questions you might want to ask me for more clarification. Also, then I would like to give some policy initiatives which I think

are critical to how we finance and why we finance education.

Briefly, Minnesota has a balance of property taxes and basically a state-supported system which is a garnering of income taxes and some excise taxes. This was established in the early 1970s. In fact, we called it the Minnesota miracle, where our goal in essence was to try to get 70 per cent state funding on a state-wide average—we have about 700,000 students in the state of Minnesota—for all kids, K-12. Now we are calling it prenatal-12, because like you, I am sure, we are educating earlier and earlier, appropriately so, I think.

Basically, that has remained our goal: 70 per cent state funding, with the remaining, of course, being local property taxes.

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In all of our jurisdictions, as in yours, there is a disparity in terms of property tax wealth. Consequently, we have balanced that off with the formula of annually—we are on a biannual budget basis, so we appropriate every two years, and of our total state budget, about 25 per cent goes directly to K-12. Then some additional money goes for property tax relief for home owners, especially in agricultural areas for farmers, much to the chagrin of the commercial-industrial people.

We do have a bit of shuffling going on now. In fact, our last tax bill, which we passed at the end of our legislative session, was vetoed by our governor and we are being called back in a special session in a couple of weeks to redesign some of our tax structure, especially our property tax structure and especially as it interfaces with both school finance and local government aid.

Nevertheless, that has remained our 70 per cent goal, but we have been increasingly criticized for lacking in equity, in part for low-property-wealth districts. They have always had an ability to offer more money through what we call a referendum. However, their referendum garners fewer dollars because of the mill rates than the higher-property-wealth districts, and so some disparities have set in in terms of ability of local school districts to finance children on a per pupil basis.

As we look across the street, we will find the more property-rich districts tending to offer more money, therefore, and setting higher standards for teachers' salaries, and in fact compounding our legislative problem, because then they become the standard for teacher settlements throughout the state. Then we have to try to scramble at the state level to provide more money

for all districts so they can come up to that standard set by high settlements in high-property-wealth districts.

We have then offered what I would call overlays on our basic formula. The overlays we have offered would be special education, of course. I represent the city of Minneapolis, and as with respective inner cities around the world—perhaps less so here in Toronto than in the United States, actually—we have great disparities of wealth. Consequently, we have concentrations of poverty and a lot of minority concentration and single-parent homes. Consequently, we feel that educationally those systems need more money per pupil to respond to the educational needs of those youngsters, and I have been a strong advocate of that.

So we have two overlays on our regular basic formula that provide some money for what we call an AFDC factor, aid for families with dependent children, which is probably not a decent title. It is for families with dependent children, a welfare component, but it is basically a poverty index. We provide additional moneys to those school districts that have a critical mass of those youngsters. Then also, because of court-ordered desegregation in three cities in the state of Minnesota—St Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth—we provide additional moneys for desegregation costs. So we have some additional overlays.

Another one we have woven in with varied degrees of success is what we call a T and E factor, a training and experience factor, for teachers who have been with the system longer and therefore their salaries have gone up according to what we call steps and lanes of training, getting masters' and doctors' degrees, and the experience of being on board for 10, 15, 20 years. Consequently, we have woven some of that in, realizing that school districts, when they settle, are sort of victims of that. Maybe "victims" is an overstatement, but in negotiating, if they are going to grant a four per cent or five per cent increase on a higher base, inevitably it is going to drive their budgets up. So we have tried to offset that with what we call our T and E factor.

This has caused some concern as we have evolved with our system, what I characterized and what was commonly characterized in Minnesota as the Minnesota miracle. In fact, our governor at that time was pictured on Time magazine, which was a big deal for Minnesota, in the early 1970s as the state that works. Generally, we have felt that the Minnesota

miracle, with all these other embellishments we have added in the last 15 years, now deserves a revamping and an overhaul.

We think what has happened—and this is from our legislative perspective—is that the people of Minnesota increasingly believe we are the ones who are raising property taxes, because we are increasingly involved in some dimensions of property tax relief, homestead credit for the home owner and agriculture credit for the farmer. Consequently now, we are back to re-examining our whole property tax system and the financing of the education system at this point, trying to deal with the questions of equity, accountability and adequacy.

We have come to the conclusion, and perhaps you have too, as elected officials, that we will never get praise for offering enough money for education. You will usually get criticized for not offering enough. That has been our circumstance, at least. It is rare when an educational group or stakeholder group comes forward and says, "You have provided enough money this legislative session." We have not experienced that yet, so we are assuming we will never experience that. That question we just have to always debate among ourselves, what is adequate by whatever judgements we use.

The accountability question we have tried to deal with with what we call some other measurements or policy initiatives for our K-12 system. We have introduced three policy initiatives which we think will introduce some accountability in the system greater than what we presently have. One is four options on choice. I do not know if you have read about that, heard about it or whatever, but the state of Minnesota is probably leading the nation, the United States, in terms of choice options for youngsters.

For junior and senior youngsters in high school now, they can go to post-secondary systems and receive credit for both high school graduation and first- or second-year college. It is for people who have accelerated, generally, people who are doing well academically, and we are just trying to break down barriers which we realize are artificially constructed either by geography, policy or financing. Why should they get in the way of the learner?

So we are saying basically is all of these public systems, be they K-12 or post-secondary, are here to best serve learners and asking how can we better do that.

That is our first choice initiative, and that is very well received. The post-secondary likes it, of course, because they get access to—state

money follows the student, by the way, the state money goes with the student and pays for the tuition. It does not quite pay for all the tuition for private colleges, but it does pay for all tuition for those credits for public systems. That has been quite popular, and we have some very good success stories of kids who have dropped out for, in some ways the right reasons, because school was very boring for them. They were escalating, in their mind at least, ahead of what was being conducted in the classroom so they were dropping out. Now they are back on line and back in the post-secondary system.

The second thing we have offered is very controversial. It is for any youngster in the K-12 system. They can go to any public school of their choice in the whole state of Minnesota. They are not bound by the geography of where they live. Generally we have not found a whole breakdown and a lot of exodus, if you will, of youngsters going into other systems, but it has given them the opportunity to shop around. We have a lot of very small school districts in northern Minnesota, which is less densely populated, and consequently some of these smaller schools do not offer some of the courses we think they ought to be offering for youngsters going into the 21st century. Consequently these youngsters and their parents now can shop around and maybe go to a larger school district that offers more course offerings. It is a bit of a threat to smaller school districts, but we think, again, for the right reason, these youngsters ought to have that opportunity.

The third choice thing we have is for the dropout where kids can come back into the public system having dropped out, and in a sense shop around within their domain for alternative schools, less rigidly structured schools, which the public schools have contracted with. That is especially appropriate in urban areas, but we have also established area learning centres throughout the state of less structure so that these youngsters can get back into the system and in a sense shop around for a less structured learning centre.

The fourth choice option we have is for people over 21. You referenced illiteracy earlier, and we are struggling with that too, but we have a number of people who are over 21 who did not get their high school graduation diploma. We are giving them now—wherever they live and whatever school district they live in in the state of Minnesota, they can go back to that school district and get the right amount of money from the state and the local to get their high school

diploma, probably not at the high school setting but at the college setting with the other choice program we have. We have a number of people coming back into the system for that reason, getting access to post-secondary. There they get their high school diploma.

Those are what I would call, in those four choice options, a policy initiative that we think is making the system more responsive and accountable, because once you sort of penetrate the heretofore monopoly, with a little competition you introduce a dimension that school districts now are competing. They say, "We can do it better here," and it affects all levels of the hierarchy in the system. Teachers, principals, parents and such say: "Hey, we've got a pretty good school. Let's make it better." We think it has been beneficial. It is quite controversial in the United States, and I think Minnesota, as I said, is leading the nation with all the choice options, although some school districts in some states have done variations of it.

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The second policy initiative that relates more directly to accountability is what we are struggling with now in terms of outcome-based education. We are trying to redesign the system around the learner, individualize it as much as we can and ask the right questions. What we are really trying to teach and how do kids best learn?

I think our system has almost been devised by the industrial assembly line, and we are trying to restructure it now to get away from what we have traditionally called seat time. If you sat in a course so long, whether you knew the subject matter or not, even when you started the course—we are kind of trying to free youngsters from that and almost enable them to test out at the front end if they want to or are able to.

We are moving our system—and it is a state-wide dimension—in that direction. We call it outcome-based education. What do we want youngsters to learn in certain areas, subject matters? That is a struggle, but we are going to stick with this, I believe, because it is asking the right question—what is best for the learner?—especially in our society in the future we are facing.

We have a blend there of state-wide, generic, stated learner objectives or outcomes. Then as it moves closer to the learner, that is where the local folks take over more, including the teachers and the local school districts. Then they get down to course and unit plans for clearer delineation of an outcome that they want from the learner.

That raises the question of assessment and feedback that we want. We have been quite determined to resist, thus far, a uniform state-wide test, in part because we feel that tends to then corrupt a curriculum or design a curriculum more towards an artificial product rather than so much the learner development as the test result. We are struggling with how we can then best assess, but we are open to exploring and we are feeling that maybe there ought to be a portfolio of options there for tests or assessments, including teacher judgement, that ought to be honoured so that we do not determine our whole process by a particular test.

The way we are engaged in that process is also, I think, critical for long-term change. That is, we have involved the stakeholders of the systems in a task force. You are called a select committee. I do not quite know the dimensions of all that, but we do have in our Legislature a commission on public education which six of us House members and six Senate members of both parties, principal or key legislators involved in education, serve on. We have, in turn, then spawned what we call a task force on reorganization. "Restructuring" and "reorganization" are sort of the big buzz-words in the United States right now.

These are stakeholders. Teacher unions, principals, school boards, superintendents, private schools, business, community and legislators serve on this large task force. Together, we are designing the system of the future. We hope, by asking the right question—what do we want youngsters to learn?—that it gets back to this outcome-based education.

I mention this process, the way we have designed that, because it has been my experience—and I think I am sort of a reformer for education. I have been involved in the Legislature for 17 years and I have chaired this education finance committee for six and see that as an opportunity for changing the system and improvement. But if you do not involve the stakeholders, those who can resist it can close the door at the schoolhouse or classroom level and block out any reform efforts if they so choose. We have tried to involve them at the front end so that they can take ownership of the process. Thus far, it is working quite well. We have been involved in it for about three years.

The final thing I would like to mention on a policy initiative is what we, as I have said, called restructuring 2, but it is basically shared decision-making. We are trying to move more authority back to the classroom and to the people

closest to the kids—the teachers, the principals and the parents—at the schoolhouse level.

We think that is the right way to go. We think private industry and corporate transformation have really seen the worth of that in trusting front-line people more than they have in previous generations and in getting feedback, involvement and empowerment, if you will, for teachers. We are trying to grant more and more of that. There have been various degrees of success on that in respective states, but we are trying that more with legislative support at the state level.

That is a brief overview. It is perhaps too cursory for you, but if there is anything that prompts questions, I would be glad to try to answer them.

The Chairman: Thank you, Representative Nelson. If we can call you Ken, it would probably be easier.

Representative Nelson: Please, that is fine. Sure.

The Chairman: Thank you. I think you have generated a number of questions. Mr Johnston is going to start. Maybe I should mention for your information that select committees of the Legislature here are different from our standing committees in that they are not permanent but are constituted for a shorter period on an outstanding issue of the time. It might be for a specific purpose or legislation. Generally it is policy-oriented. Our select committee on education was constituted, I believe, in February 1988 and its mandate has been renewed on an annual basis, just to give you an idea of where we are coming from.

Representative Nelson: Thank you; that is helpful.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation. It was very interesting, although I do not think you can possibly answer all the questions and so we will have to go to St Paul and—

Interjections.

Mrs O'Neill: And I have not even got an alternative.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Time does not allow it.

Welcome to the committee and to Toronto and thank you for the information. There are so many questions to ask. I will maybe just try to run through a bunch of them quickly.

I am very interested in the concept of differentiated grants to the inner-city schools. I want to know if you can give us some details on how that is based. What is the differentiation

between a regular grant and one that would be sent to an inner-city school in your city?

Representative Nelson: First of all, let me say that I will send you a document that overviews all our educational finance. That can answer it better than I can right now. Desegregation is basically a grants program to three respective school districts; that is just outright state money with expectations that it will be spent on the area of improving quality education in the desegregated school districts, one of which came under a court order in Minneapolis and the other two under rule and regulation.

Additional costs related to it, which we argue for—and I am here speaking as a representative from a school district of Minneapolis—the money has been offered now for about four years. We hope to keep that alive. I think there is general awareness that there are extra problems and extra challenges in a desegregated community, but generally in Minnesota it also reflects a disparate community in terms of income; but it has to be targeted and generally spent and school districts have to report back on how they spent it and how it relates to desegregation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is there an educational evaluation component of that as well?

Representative Nelson: There has not been, and people are going to increasingly raise those questions, appropriately so. Thus far, all we have asked for is that they report how they spent it and that it has to be spent according to their judgement and related to desegregation.

The other is more a part of the formula and is what we call the formula for financing, which is that proportionally there will be more money per student in those school districts that have a certain percentage of poor youngsters. As that percentage increases, there are additional moneys, up to a cap. If we let it go on up, Minneapolis would receive significant amounts of money, but we do cap it off. That too is explained in the booklet. There is a span there that affects, I suppose, about 20 per cent of our school districts which receive additional moneys in that manner per pupil.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Has there been an evaluation process put into that to see if those kinds of dollars are making any difference in terms of outcome?

Representative Nelson: That is a good question. Not in terms of education, no, there has not.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Another thing that flowed from another thing which ties into this in

my view is the notion of your choices: the one of being able to move to any school in the state. You mentioned the impact this has on the small rural school that cannot provide all the options. What about the impact on the inner-city school where the bright kid may then be encouraged to go off to a better area and the people who are then left behind are in an even more difficult cadre of students for teachers to deal with?

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Representative Nelson: We have a limiting factor on it. I should have mentioned it earlier. Any school district that is under a desegregation guideline, which our three urban areas are, can override that. If it violates a desegregation balance, that student cannot migrate to another school district unless this home school district permits it to happen. Minneapolis has prevented whites from exiting. St Paul has not because it is within its desegregation guidelines and it has some minorities coming into its school district. So thus far they are playing it differently, but they have the authority to let desegregation rules overrule the migration.

I should mention also, in the choice patterns, school districts do not have to receive students from other districts. They can say, "No, we will not participate in the choice program." For one reason, there might be space problems. They do not have to build extra buildings to receive other students from outside. So they can say "no" either on a class level, on a building level or on a district-wide level, but a district cannot prevent students from migrating out, except for the desegregated.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do I gather that you now have a voucher system in terms of financing; that the money is allocated per student and that money travels with the student? You gave the example of a kid going on to post-secondary at the same time as he—

Representative Nelson: Yes. We choose not to call it a voucher.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is probably wise politically.

Representative Nelson: Yes. Our choice programs are all within the public system except for the post-secondary where youngsters can go to private colleges if they want to. Yes, the money that they would receive had they stayed full-time in their school district can go with them, to the degree that the costs are justified.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I also gather your alternative schools are almost all outside the public system as compared with what we have

seen in the city of Toronto where we have many alternative schools but a large proportion of them are within the public system under public board control.

Representative Nelson: It is hard to say whether they are in or out. They are contracting with, but in essence they are outside of, the public schools. They have this ongoing contract with the public schools. We have guaranteed those alternative schools 85 per cent of what every youngster would receive in a regular one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have one final question. I know that others must have a lot of them and I will just ask one more at this point. This is the notion of the shared decision-making and moving it down to more front-line worker control, if I can put it that way. Has there been anything happening in terms of structures around notions like school councils getting more control over hiring of teachers within an individual school and that kind of thing?

What we have here, it seems to me—people may not agree with me on this—is that the teacher, and especially the principal, of an individual school has enormous power and control over the individual outcomes within that particular school in our structure, even though accountability mechanisms towards our boards and the provincial government are supposedly in place.

One of the things that has happened in some experiments here around school councils is that parents and teachers have come together and have made decisions even about hiring of principals within an elementary school, for instance; that kind of thing. Is that the kind of devolution of power that is taking place or is it more just allowing the professionals to have more say and more control?

Representative Nelson: It sounds like you are ahead of us.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No. It has been something which has not moved that quickly. It is only in some schools in the city of Toronto and I am not sure if it is in any of the other areas around the province; maybe Ottawa, but I am not sure.

Representative Nelson: We have not gone that far that they would actually do the hiring of the principal, although several people—not just the teachers but some public interest groups—have suggested this for some time. Using the example of the medical clinic, the doctors will hire the administrator or the lawyers will hire their administrator for a law firm. Why not a school hiring the principal?

That has not come that far, but we could see that resulting. There have been some smaller collaboratives in some schools in Minneapolis, for instance, where they have sort of mutually agreed upon a contract on the role of the principal and the role of the teachers. I think it would be laudable to get there, but we have not given up financial decisions for constructing school buildings or school building staffs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much. If my other questions are not covered by Ken, as I am sure they will be, I will jump back in later on for a minute.

Mrs O'Neill: Just to clarify, Mr Johnston, no, that has not happened in Ottawa yet.

Representative Nelson, I found you most refreshing. I am really happy you are where you are because you seem to have such a handle on the whole issue. I think it is great that you have been there as long as you have because often in these positions people come and go. In education finance, we do need to know what we are talking about and I am glad you have been given that opportunity to continue.

I have two or three things. First of all, I am fascinated that you have 565 school districts. At least that is what my documentation says.

Representative Nelson: It is about 435, but it is still too many.

Mrs O'Neill: It is very heavy. They are financially independent. At least that is what the document also says. Can you tell us what you mean. What does "financially independent" mean? I guess that tied in with that is the other statement, which is below that, that voter approval is necessary for the budget. Does this mean it is almost a referendum when each of those districts passes a budget?

Representative Nelson: We have approximately 435 school districts, some of them quite small. The goal of the Minnesota miracle was to try to get to 70 per cent state funding on a state-wide average. That will vary per school district, dependent upon property wealth.

In the district I represent, the city of Minneapolis, it is almost an inversion of that because it is a property-wealth district. Minneapolis antes up about 80 per cent of the money per pupil. The state comes across with the 20 per cent. That balances out according to property valuations. As it is here, I am sure, we have a lot of fluctuations. Agricultural land has gone down and up in the last 10 years. That varies and every two years is sort of equalized anew.

Every school district has an elected school board. I do not know if that is equivalent to a trustee.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes. Ours would be much larger, it seems. Each district would be much larger.

Representative Nelson: Yes, here in Ontario. Ours are not compensated except that in most school districts there is something like a per diem for a meeting: \$25 a day for some meetings. In some school districts such as Minneapolis, I think, they probably get \$1,000 a year or \$2,000 a year. It is really very demanding, very complex. School boards in the United States tend to get embroiled in tax and budget issues, and with all due respect to them, and I think I would say this to them personally, it stifles their vision in terms of policy in education and it is hard for them to get beyond the immediacy of those decisions. So school boards, as we look in the United States, really need some reform and restructuring in terms of their role. Can they be lifted to more policy and vision in education?

Mrs O'Neill: That is why I wonder what this document means by their being fiscally independent and/or needing approval—

Representative Nelson: Independent school boards are elected.

Mrs O'Neill: But they are not independent from the state. There are limits on the levy they can place, I guess.

Representative Nelson: Good question. We will struggle with that.

Mrs O'Neill: That is what I am trying to zero in on.

Representative Nelson: We always have a delicate balance between state and local. We refer to Minnesota as a local control state. The local school board, and that is the independent, oversees its local district to a great degree. Some people do not want us to fund more because they feel it takes away their authority. That is why we arbitrarily at one time said 70 per cent versus 30 per cent. We have never achieved the 70 per cent. We are about 62 per cent to 65 per cent right now. That is a part of our special session. The governor wants to bump us to 66 per cent.

Mr Mahoney: Of approved expenditures?

Mrs O'Neill: This is complicated enough, Mr Mahoney.

Representative Nelson: It is supplemented by what we call the referendum.

Mrs O'Neill: And there is an annual referendum on their budget?

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Representative Nelson: If they so choose. We are legislatively going to try to restrict that. We feel some school districts, the more affluent ones in the western suburbs, can easily go to their people and get as much money as they want whenever they want it, and some of us have felt that that is creating imbalances in the system. So to their chagrin, we are going to try to limit their ability to go to their own property taxpayers. Now we are saying that they can go no more than annually and at election time, when other issues and candidates are up. Traditionally, they have been going in nonelection time. It is just a school referendum on the issue and they get their folks out and they can pass them rather handily. We tend to feel that if they get more people out at the same time, they will pass them less handily.

Mrs O'Neill: I think you are going in the right direction. I will not ask any more about that because I really can hardly believe that it is still happening, but in any case you are definitely going in the right direction.

May I ask how centrally controlled is the capital program for school building?

Representative Nelson: That is basically a local initiative.

Mrs O'Neill: Is there participation by the state in the actual funding, then?

Representative Nelson: There is some state funding, but it is not large. It is principally a local effort.

Mrs O'Neill: Have you dealt with the issue about heritage languages that was brought to us by the previous presenter?

Representative Nelson: Not as well as you folks, I suspect. We are not as multicultural as you. I really want to applaud you as Canadians. I have always loved your mosaic of cultures versus our melting pot, whatever that means, that imagery in the United States. I think we have not celebrated ethnicity as much as you have. I am just so impressed with the quality of life in Toronto.

I look at the diversity of cultures you have and I feel that really has been a tremendous example of how you can live more harmoniously, because you have such a diversity of cultures here whereas we tend to have one or two larger minority groups, blacks primarily or American Indians, and now we have a number of Southeast Asians. It does not seem to have the integrative effect, if you will. It has more of a sort of conflict effect in our country. We have not integrated it. Our curriculum is out of date, I think, in terms of

multiculturalism. That is where we really have to do some homework.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much for the compliment. It is a lot of hard work and certainly we are working with the school boards in developing our own policies in that area.

We are all struggling with the new technologies, whether they be in automotive shops or whether they be strictly in computer labs. Can you tell us how you are grappling with that both funding-wise and policy-wise.

Representative Nelson: We launched some initiatives in the early 1980s. We call it the Technology Demonstration Act. We said that we thought it would be appropriate for schools to use more computers and software in terms of instruction, as well as administration. But we were aware that our staff were not as in tune with the computer as the youngsters and the students were. We did not go heavily into hardware, but we wanted to develop quality software and staff training.

We launched this planning act and provided initiative funds for all school districts to participate, where they had to sit down and plan how they were going to integrate technology, both into the classroom and administratively. That plan had to be approved by the state before they could receive state moneys, and then they would receive state moneys to implement it. We also established a software quality list and they could get state moneys to buy off the quality software list. We were aware that there is a lot of software out there, some of it not of quality, and we did not want the state moneys or public moneys going for that.

That started our process and got it launched pretty extensively for the state of Minnesota. It was a heavy expenditure by the state. We have a lot of computers out there, but also a lot of staff training and software development.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you still keeping pretty close central control? It seemed to be very close central control.

Representative Nelson: I think we sort of dropped the ball on it, frankly. We just have not kept a state initiative going for technology as we should have. That is my feeling. We kind of backed off and allowed districts to do their own thing. We did have state control quite intentionally, I would say, in terms of software quality. There were censorship questions. "Are you censoring whatever?" But we wove in what we thought were objective criteria and basically people accepted it because they felt there was a lot of bad software out there that school districts

could be victims of simply because of glossy materials or whatever. We think that was well done and we never received negative feedback on it that I recall.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: I would also like to thank you for your comments and compliments about Canada and about Toronto. You may not feel quite so warmly towards us tonight when we whip the pants off Minnesota. We are only hospitable the first night in town.

Representative Nelson: I want to wish you well. I thought one of my comments that perhaps would endear you to me is to say I just came up early to get World Series tickets. By the way, in reference to your SkyDome, I would suggest that during the World Series you keep the dome closed and use noise to your advantage.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It certainly worked for you guys.

Representative Nelson: It certainly did in 1987. I mean, it was tremendous. It is a 10th player in the field at least.

The Chairman: We also have to paint our dome white so that they lose the ball.

Mr Mahoney: Give everyone hankies.

Representative Nelson: Yes, right.

The Chairman: I just have one quick question before we finish up with Ken Keyes's comments and questions. It relates to something Mrs O'Neill started along. You have 435 districts and 700,000 students?

Representative Nelson: Yes.

The Chairman: I think we have 170 boards and 1.8 million students, so our ratio is something like one to seven as far as the number of boards, also known as districts, is concerned. Do you find that your bureaucracy is top heavy and do you have any idea what percentage of your budget total, state and local, would be spent on bureaucracy and administration as opposed to actually teaching the students?

Representative Nelson: We know exactly what that is. I do not know right now even in round figures. We will send you that document as well. We have a pretty good reporting system, we call it UFRS, unified financial and reporting system, so it is all apples to apples across school districts.

Yes, it is a cause for concern that we tend therefore, per pupil, to have more administrative costs in the smaller districts than the larger and we are not happy with that, but some legislators,

former colleagues of mine, have started to talk about consolidation.

The Chairman: Is there a message in there?

Representative Nelson: Yes. They once were legislators.

The Chairman: Until they had this idea.

Representative Nelson: It is very controversial in Minnesota and that local school means a lot to people. We are starting to raise the right questions, fortunately. What is the function of the school and the purpose of the school? You had a little athletic conversation yesterday. Sometimes in Minnesota it seems like it is for athletic teams.

We are asking the right questions and telling people that if they cannot best serve the students to meet this mission objective, then they had better look at joining with other school districts, and without consolidating, an enforced consolidation, we provided all kinds of incentives.

A lot of them are coming to their own conclusions now. They just cannot serve the youngsters well with the low number of youngsters they have, so they are what we call pairing and sharing, closing down a grade school in one and a senior high in another, busing staff around, also using telecommunications more, at least in low incident courses. So some of that is happening, but slowly. Thus far we have chosen not to go in and enforce consolidation.

The Chairman: Thank you. Ken? The other Ken.

Mr Keyes: With a name like Ken, I knew he would have an excellent presentation. I am sure you did too. If you like ethnicity in Toronto, you would love it in other parts of the province, even more so.

The Chairman: We will take him to meet the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada.

Mr Keyes: That is right. I would suggest it.

Following up on the last point for just a moment, have there been no studies or movements by the state to try to go to the county system? You still use a county system in Minnesota, do you not, a county form of government?

Representative Nelson: Yes, we do, but it is not coterminous either boundary-wise or jurisdiction-wise with school districts.

Mr Keyes: We moved to the county system and we are now trying to strengthen county systems of government in the province, but we started with it some years ago in the school field

and it seemingly has worked reasonably well. We have reduced ourselves now to 100 boards or thereabouts in the province versus about—what did we have before?

Mr R. F. Johnston: In the 1960s, I think it was around 1,600 boards.

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Mrs O'Neill: You might be out of a job, Mr Keyes, if you say it is 100 when it is 170.

Mr Keyes: Well, 170.

Mrs O'Neill: We can certainly talk about amalgamation.

Mr Keyes: I have not had a job for a long while. Noting the fact that Representative Nelson has almost more years of experience in government than the total combined on this side, being novices here, it is a good learning experience.

No attempt has been made, though, to try to work and strengthen the county system by looking at it and getting over all the inequities that must develop in the type of programming that happens with all those boards.

Representative Nelson: No, not in terms of schools. We have our own trouble with counties in other ways, in terms of property taxes. The war we are having in Minnesota now, and there is a bit of a civil war in property taxes, is between the state and local units of government other than schools—well, not just other than schools. I think local levies generally across the state are about 50 per cent schools and 50 per cent other, including counties and cities.

What has happened through this Minnesota miracle process is, as I said, we are blamed a lot for property tax increases and we do not levy property taxes. We have got involved by reimbursing home owners when the property taxes have got a bit out of line and proportionately increased beyond what we think they should; then we have reimbursed. Now we are carrying that burden indefinitely until we can sever ourselves from that expectation. That is our debate in Minnesota right now.

We are trying to shift, in the taxpayers' mind at least, where the focus of attention ought to be, on the school board member, the city council member or the county commissioner, locally, in terms of property taxes. We are trying. We felt in fact that in our local government aid, which is money back to the counties and the cities for services, we have almost obliquely encouraged them to raise taxes because proportionately they get more state money. We are trying to put some checks and balances into that whole process now.

I only mention that if you are thinking of stepping down that pathway. Be cautious.

Mr Keyes: I have a couple of quick ones, just very technical. Under the option of going to any school they want to, you have said that the receiving board could say, "No, we don't have any room." What about transportation then? Is that transportation provided by the state for that particular option or is it at the student's own whim whether he or she can take advantage of those other areas?

Representative Nelson: Transportation only upon arriving at the receiving district's boundary is provided by the state, except for very low income. We have provided moneys for low income folks who have wanted their youngsters to go to an adjacent school district. We will provide assistance to the border of that district, but in all cases, once they reached the receiving district boundaries, they are then transported by the state in that local district.

Mr Keyes: That is a fairly extensive transportation system, as we have here now. We increased it significantly when we reduced the number of boards.

Representative Nelson: Yes, it is fairly extensive. But again, not a whole lot of youngsters have participated in this program. It is now being evaluated by the federal government. The Bush administration likes it because it is of no cost to anybody, or at least to the feds, so they call it a reform initiative, but not that many people or youngsters have participated in it. It is here to stay, I think, for Minnesota and increasingly for other states.

Mr Keyes: In one of the other ones you have talked about people going to school who are over 21, until they got their high school diploma. Does that really cover the whole adult education field, so that any adults over 21 who may wish to return, regardless of age, and did not complete high school, could go back to many of the courses offered by the high schools, even though they might not even lead totally to graduation? We are wrestling with adult education in our system.

Representative Nelson: Our adult basic education is through our community education component and a part of every school district in the state offers community education. That is also a blending of funding, local and state, for adult basic education and for youth service and youth development programs, and for early childhood. We launched our early childhood programs through community education so that

all school districts could have access, and that is for zero to five. We require a family component to that. The parent must be involved with the child, zero to five. They cannot just drop the child off. They have to be engaged with the child in the education setting.

That is our community education program, but the over-21 provision is with the expectation that they will graduate or go towards graduation. A few of them do attend courses in high schools. In fact, we are a little concerned about that, some adults coming back into the schools maybe for the wrong reasons. So we really left the local school boards that discretion of whether they would have returning adults be able to attend classes in high school or whether in fact, as is the case in most cases, they go to a post-secondary system. But the goal is graduation. Our assumption is that they are fairly close to it. Now, if they are really illiterate and have a long way to go, then I suspect it would be referred more to our adult basic education program.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is a differentiation in the grant for that. Ours is about half the under-21 regular student grant, \$3,800 or whatever it is. It is around \$1,900 that we provide for the continuing education style or what you are calling the community education style. Do you have that much of a differentiation in your system?

Representative Nelson: I do not think ours is quite that rich for adult basic.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So it is not even 50 per cent.

Representative Nelson: I do not believe it is. I know we pump new moneys into the literacy programs, but I do not know how that breaks up per student, per use.

Mr Keyes: I will not take the others' time, but to go back to the question of a different method of financing since you have been on that committee, you heard part of the former presenter's comment about the income tax as a base and we had a commission hearing author yesterday before us who said that was his preferred method of raising the dollars for education. Have you ever given any look, within your committee, to using the income tax as the sole base for providing moneys for education?

Representative Nelson: We would not have broken it out in that dimension. We would talk more about state support which is dependent about income tax and excise taxes for its revenue and sales tax. We have six per cent sales tax which is all for state expenditures.

Mr Keyes: That is very nice.

Representative Nelson: Yes, we find it quite nice. We have enabled three or four municipalities—

Mr Mahoney: They are American dollars; it is real money.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is not this stuff.

Representative Nelson: Out of that state pot then, we get up to 70 per cent, or our goal is the 70 per cent. I think there ought to be still a balance, although we have thought about and our governor has proposed at one time that there should be 100 per cent state funding. But we are not so sure that that is wise policywise in terms of ownership too of the local schooling process. So we think we have a fairly decent balance—I suppose it is always subject to judgement—of going for the 70 per cent but letting the 30 per cent be on the property tax.

Another question raised by that sometimes is, of course, who benefits from the schools? I suspect it is true here too that about 15 per cent of the homes are represented in the schools and we have those groups sometimes who would like to disengage from supporting schools. We remind them that it is for our common benefit that all kids are educated and therefore we all participate either as property tax owners or income taxpayers. I guess, for the time being, we would like to keep that balance but continue to strive for the 70 per cent share.

Mr Keyes: Hawaii is the only state where it is 100 per cent funding?

Representative Nelson: I am not aware of that.

Mr Keyes: Is that right? I believe that Hawaii is the 100 per cent. That is in the documents anyway.

A quick one on teacher supply: With average salaries of all teachers at \$29,000 as shown here—that is probably in about the top third of the state, as we see them all—do you have any particular shortage there?

Representative Nelson: We do not seem to. I think we are about 12th in the United States in teachers' salaries. We tend to export teachers from Minnesota. In fact, I started my way to this table yesterday by stopping at the Ministry of Education. I was just talking to somebody over there. I said, "My son is studying French at the University of Minnesota and hopes to teach French some day," and he said, "Maybe he could come up here." I will certainly mention it to him. I am sure he would love to. He is a great outdoors person and loves fishing and whatever.

We are a net exporter of teachers. We train a number of youngsters to be teachers in the state of Minnesota and we are a net exporter of teachers. So we do not anticipate a shortage. Now there has been talk around the country and some of the unions—Albert Shanker who heads up the National Federation of Teachers talks increasingly about a turnover, 50 per cent perhaps in the next 10 to 15 years in the United States, for teachers. We do not see that dramatic demographic for the state of Minnesota. I do not know if it will be true for other states, but we do not see it that way.

1150

Mr Keyes: We have provided early retirement here for a large number of teachers and they opted for it. We are in a situation where we would accept quite a few well qualified teachers.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is no problem. The minister has told me that any number of times.

Mr Keyes: There is no problem, but I think we would accept some well qualified teachers here. They are all challenges. There are no problems with problems; they are all challenges.

Mrs O'Neill: I have a supplementary on this. I was going to ask you about teachers' pensions in conjunction with this. How much does the state contribute? Do you have a problem that we are facing of great unfunded liability? Where are you with that whole kind of thing?

Representative Nelson: It is not my area of expertise. It actually runs through another committee, the labour committee, which is—

Mrs O'Neill: Is that right? That is very interesting.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that not separation? Not making it part of the education budget notion that some people here want. We would rather look at it in a labour—

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Johnston, we live with realities on this committee.

Representative Nelson: I get that impression back there too. Obviously it is a critical component. We have had early retirement incentives down to the age of 55. Again, we lost, we think, some very good teachers, but our teacher pension debate rages. I think we have unfunded liability, which in the long term we are going to take care of, but it is going to be a long-term problem for the state. We have done some miscalculations where we made some bad political judgements a couple of years ago. That is, we think, on a correction course now.

Mrs O'Neill: It is too bad we cannot all learn from each other on this one.

Mr Keyes: It depends on whether we follow up this conversation.

The Chairman: I guess I need not tell you which side are the government members and which side are the opposition. You can tell them by the appropriate smile.

The Chairman: Representative Nelson, I would very much like to thank you for stopping by and—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have more questions, please.

The Chairman: Sorry?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I put my hand up for a few more questions, if I might. Is that all right? Just some quick ones.

Do you have such a thing as isolate boards for some of your northern boards, the sort of thing we have in some of our very small, small communities in the north, which do not even have municipality status, that kind of thing?

Representative Nelson: What are they called?

Mr R. F. Johnston: We call them isolate boards, where it is 100 per cent funding from the province essentially.

Mrs O'Neill: Small isolated school boards.

Representative Nelson: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about native education? I presume most of that is federal bucks for on-reserve natives as it is with us.

Representative Nelson: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is it for off-reserve natives in the cities? Is there any special funding in that area?

Representative Nelson: There has not been except as it would be a component of the desegregation with the AFDC.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have just mentioned special funding for special ed as we do as well. I am not sure of the philosophy in the state in terms of choice around segregation, integration or mainstreaming of special ed. Are most of your formulae encouraging integration or segregation of that?

Representative Nelson: That is debatable, I guess, special ed. We are struggling with that because it has been our growth area. We are starting to challenge some of those numbers and some of those decisions. We have had some special hearings on special ed and found in fact that some parents have said they want their

youngsters in special ed because they get more individual attention because of class sizes.

We have mandated some class size ratios but we are not sure that is the right motive if it is not truly a special ed case. We are finding some subjective judgements that do not translate across school district boundaries equally. We are concerned about it. We are tending to try to push a little more towards early intervention skills of teachers and in fact trying to get some additional staff into classrooms K through 6, so that at least there are not misplacements of special ed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have, I presume, an official appeal process for gettings kids in and out as we do?

Representative Nelson: Right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about year-long schooling? That has been used in many western parts of the states as a financial incentive for California, especially in Utah, but now they are looking at it in terms of educational value as well. I wondered if Minnesota has been looking at that issue much.

Representative Nelson: Not enough, I think. I would like to see more of that. We too have been agrarian-determined in terms of our school calendar, and I would like more of that in the urban setting. Maybe we could have air-conditioned schools in July and August.

We had one school district go to that a few years ago simply for space reasons. It was smaller school districts and they rotated by semesters through the whole school year and found it quite worth while. I think that it is since discontinued, I guess, just because they no longer have the space trouble.

We are in our cities now having again more elementary kids coming in—well, across the state demographically more youngsters. The space question is confronting us and we are trying now to use some private space. We are contracting with some corporations and other sites around the city to have classrooms. It fits well with our choice program because people then can take their youngster on the way to work or downtown, if they work downtown. So we are doing more of that.

I have asked our state planning agency to conduct an inventory within our metropolitan area, which is about two million people for the

state of Minnesota in seven counties with Minneapolis and St Paul being the hubs, realizing that before building we ought to use other public space if we can. Since we are using private space, we ought to be able to do that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is something we should be learning from you, I think.

Mrs O'Neill: Very good idea.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Actually some information sent to the committee on that would be very useful as it comes available.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, very.

Representative Nelson: Okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not know if you have seen our first two reports.

Representative Nelson: No, I have not. I would like to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I might suggest to the chair that we give you copies of the first two reports and obviously send you copies of the next one, which may be harder to come up with a consensus on. But because you have participated especially well today, we will be glad to send it on to you.

Representative Nelson: Thank you. We will also send back to you some of the documents of the special task force that I characterize as trying to move our system towards optimum-based education.

The Chairman: Thank you. The clerk will be sending you out a package, including our previous reports; also a copy of the transcript from our hearings. I would just like to offer you the appreciation of the committee for dropping in to discuss some of the educational and financial concerns and initiatives in Minnesota. It has been very helpful.

Representative Nelson: Thank you very much. I have appreciated it. Please visit us some time and look me up. I have left my card and address, so you are surely welcome at any time. We would love to have you.

The Chairman: Thank you. The select committee on education stands adjourned till two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1156.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in committee room 1.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to start this afternoon's session of the select committee on education, since we do have a quorum. I would like to compliment members on their punctuality this afternoon. It is very refreshing.

Mr Mahoney: We were here on time, but you did not start on time.

Mr Villeneuve: We will take an increase in salary any time.

The Chairman: The natives are restless this afternoon.

Our first presentation this afternoon is from the Mushkegowuk Council. Would you come forward, gentlemen, and identify yourselves for the purpose of Hansard, and begin whenever you like?

MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL

Mr Long: My name is John Long. I am the executive director of the Mushkegowuk Council. To my right is William Blake, who is a consultant to the council and who also has the position of director emeritus for the Timmins Board of Education. I will be making the formal presentation and then we will both be available to answer questions which the committee may have.

We bring you greetings from the Mushkegowuk First Nations of western James and Hudson bays in northeastern Ontario. Unfortunately, our chairman and board of chiefs are unable to attend today, because they are hosting a visit by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in Moosonee-Moose Factory today and in Attawapiskat tomorrow.

This presentation consists of six parts: an introduction to our member communities; a description of the three types of schools and the funding arrangement; our planning process; a discussion on adequacy and equity; our proposal; and a challenge to Ontario.

As you will see on the following page, from north to south our seven member communities include the Weenusk First Nation located at Peawanuck, a community of some 200; the Attawapiskat First Nation, located at Attawapiskat, a community of 1,150; the Fort Albany (Kashechewan) First Nation, located at Kashechewan, a community of 1,100; the Fort Albany (Sinclair Island) First Nation located at Sinclair

Island, a community of 800; the Moose Factory First Nation, located at Indian Reserve 1, Moose Factory, a community of 1,100; the Mocrebec Indian government located in Moosonee and Moose Factory, which membership numbers about 900, and the New Post First Nation located near Cochrane, a community of 45.

Our apologies for the use of the expression "provincial schools." We should probably say schools operated by provincial school boards. The New Post First Nation sends some 12 elementary and one secondary student to schools operated by the Cochrane Iroquois Falls/Black River Matheson Board of Education.

The Mocrebec Indian government does not have a land base, so its members are generally taxpayers who attend provincial schools in Moose Factory and Moosonee. The Moose Factory District School Area Board has some 388 students attending Moose Factory's Ministik school. Of this number, the Moose Factory First Nation sends approximately 67 per cent of the students, about 250 students, actually. Tuition fees at this school were \$7,825 last year, so the first nation paid some \$2 million to rent space in the school for its students. When compared with the Timmins Board of Education elementary school tuition fees of \$4,717, it is apparent that remote northern education costs 65 per cent more, only going as far north as Moosonee, Moose Factory, due to the location and diseconomies of scale.

The costs are even higher when it comes to secondary education. The Timmins Board of Education charges a fee of \$6,227, compared to the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board fee of \$14,776 in Moosonee, which amounts to 137 per cent more. The Ontario Ministry of Education approves these operating costs.

Students from the Moose Factory First Nation can choose to attend either the Northern Lights Secondary School in Moosonee or a more southerly urban school. Secondary schooling for students from further north on the coast of western James and Hudson Bay has been provided largely out of community by purchasing tuition from urban school boards, namely, in Timmins and North Bay. Education costs there must include room and board, transportation and various small allowances. This year the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board is mounting an exciting experiment and providing

six credits through distance education in Attawapiskat, Kashechewan and Fort Albany.

We have had some concerns that payment of huge sums of money for renting space in these schools does not accumulate much in the way of educational equity for the purchaser; in other words, land, buildings, programs, staff. The Cochrane-Iroquois Falls, Timmins and James Bay Lowlands boards have, however, shown some willingness to find creative solutions which meet the first nations' concerns for more control. The federal government has been willing to provide at least some resources for the nonresident first nation students involved. This is mainly in the area of counselling services for students attending school.

Three of our communities have on-reserve federal elementary schools operated by the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: at Peawanuck, grades kindergarten to 8, some 31 students; Attawapiskat, junior kindergarten to grade 8, 334; Fort Albany, junior kindergarten to grade 8, 153 students.

Funding for these schools is determined by the government of Canada according to an operating budget, which they divide into various programs, and a complement of person years. Should the first nation wish to assume full control of its federal school, the person years and part of the operating budget are converted into a fixed funding formula which generates funds based on the September enrolment and, presumably, increases annually.

Funds are accessed from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development through a contribution arrangement in which the first nation must make a commitment that graduates of the first nation school will be able to successfully transfer into provincial schools. During the early stages of our planning for first nation control, we adopted six basic principles which have guided us in our deliberation: local autonomy, regional service and support, self-governance, level of service, relationships and federal responsibility.

Our main objective in gaining responsibility for the delivery of education in these communities was to improve the level of education. We commissioned a number of studies, including research on education and local control, a facilities review, a number of transfer-plan working documents and a personnel management package. We revealed that one of the federal schools at Fort Albany was a serious safety hazard, and we pointed out a number of

deficiencies in all of the federal school programs.

As an aside, the school at Fort Albany has been closed twice in the past two years, once because of life safety concerns and another time because of concern over asbestos. The students have lost 123 days in the last two years. In addition, there is a problem in Fort Albany of the location of the school, which is on the mainland, joined by a narrow causeway to the island where 148 of the students live. Four of them live on the mainland where the school is located, so their school is disrupted during the spring breakup.

Recognizing the shortage of fully qualified native teachers in our communities, we commissioned a teacher-education project design. Ontario really lags behind the rest of Canada in providing community-based native teacher training.

Responding to community wishes, we also commissioned a seven-module, customized board training package to help prepare local education authorities to take on the responsibilities of local control. After three years of planning, we assisted the Kashechewan First Nation to take full control of its elementary school on August 23 of this year. The school has 272 students from kindergarten to grade 8. With less than a month's experience in operating this school, we can only make some very general comments on the adequacy of finances.

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In order to match the higher salaries paid to teachers employed by provincial school boards in Moosonee and Moose Factory, we developed a very competitive salary scale and benefits package, including designation for the purposes of Ontario's teacher superannuation, in Kashechewan. We were fortunate to be able to interview and retain 11 of the 13 teachers from the former federal school and to create an additional position. However, it appears that additional funds are needed for high-cost speech and language exceptionalities and for what we call second-level consulting and supervisory services. Our Cree-language instructors require added support, and the curriculum must become more culturally appropriate. We can do this, but only with sufficient resources.

A central feature of our model for locally controlled education is the community education plan, which will vary from community to community. This plan also addresses the issue of accountability, which your committee is dealing with. We hope to see locally controlled schools at Peawanuck, Attawapiskat and Sinclair Island in the very near future. As the education program

can vary from community to community, so the formula funding should vary, but under the current Indian Affairs system it is fixed.

Last month, Canada's Prime Minister told delegates to a party convention that education reform would be a top priority of his government. Ironically, in July his officials in Indian Affairs released a guideline for rank-ordering for education capital projects in Ontario. We commissioned a review of this document and concluded that it is unfairly weighted in favour of larger communities and does not address the basic problem of Indian Affairs' capital projects budget in Ontario. Issues of health, safety and school programming, a key variable under local control, are also not sufficiently addressed.

Education costs are high in the remote north and particularly in northeastern Ontario. Ontario's Ministry of Education realizes this, provides generous operating grants and builds showpiece schools such as those in Moosonee and Moose Factory. Last Saturday was the official opening of the \$7-million addition to the high school in Moosonee, James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board's Northern Lights Secondary School. As they take greater control over education in their communities, Ontario's first nations deserve at least the same level of funding and the same quality of schools.

I have another paragraph which I am going to insert at this point.

With very little in the form of industrial and commercial development in our region, we have some concerns about the pooling of assessment and our access to a fair share of the money which would be raised. Our concern is twofold: As citizens of the province, the children of first nations citizens may be entitled to a fair share of these funds; second, we are concerned that pooling may have a negative impact on those school boards with which we currently have working relations.

We have proposed some sort of arm's-length arrangement with Ontario's Ministry of Education to achieve this desired level of resources, comparable with Ontario standards but federally funded in western James Bay and Hudson Bay.

At present, Indian Affairs can provide funds through only two mechanisms: tuition fees for renting space in provincial schools, and a fixed-formula funding for first nations schools. We believe that real equality of opportunity for Ontario's first nations requires more flexibility and that a third mechanism is urgently needed in northeastern Ontario. This may require new federal and provincial enabling legislation.

We submitted our proposal to Ontario and Canada almost one year ago through the offices of the Indian Commission of Ontario.

It was in 1894 that the government of Ontario first granted \$100 to the English-speaking school at Moose Factory and in 1904 to Fort Albany. There have been many changes during the past 95 years.

The Hope commission of 1950 felt it would be "possible to provide adequate educational opportunities for the small and dispersed Indian population of this province only when their education becomes a responsibility of the provincial government and is co-ordinated with the publicly supported system of education."

Today it is generally recognized that it is the Indian community and not the province which must be responsible for educating Indian children. If these communities are to have the means of providing a standard of education which will allow graduates of locally controlled Indian schools to compete successfully in the provincial secondary and post-secondary institutions, they cannot simply inherit a substandard underfunded system. They must have proper operating and capital finances.

Ontario may not be the key player in this process, but Ontario certainly does have an important role to play in any local-level tripartite self-government negotiations. Ontario is a leader in the field of education and we trust that this committee will agree that all Ontario's citizens deserve a first-class education. A national funding formula is inconsistent with equality of educational opportunity in this province.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the Mushkegowuk Council for its presentation. We will now open up for questions from the members.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Mr Long, for the presentation. It is fascinating but raises a whole pile of other questions which I would like more information on. Perhaps I can start with one of the latter points, which is your notion of a new arm's-length agreement and the possibility of enabling legislation provincially and federally to change how funding takes place at this point. You did not go into much detail about that. I wonder if you could expand a little on the proposal, the idea you have been putting forward.

Mr Long: You have included in your material—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it at the back?

Mr Long: —a proposal for self-government and education, which we submitted through the

auspices of the Indian Commission of Ontario. It is fairly general, and we do not have any hard and fast rules on this. We feel there needs to be a third option. In other words, instead of having the choice between a fixed formula for running your own school or having no equity by sending your students elsewhere, there should be recognition that in order to provide an education comparable with what could be provided in a provincial school system, additional and variable funding should be required.

Mr R. F. Johnston: These negotiations are limited, I take it, to tripartite negotiations among the federal government, the bands involved and the province. I presume that is what you are talking about.

Mr Long: That is correct. We also feel that those negotiations would be most successful if the seven communities were directly involved in direct negotiations with the province and the federal government.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Where does this stand at the moment? Have you any idea what the province's or the federal government's responses are to this concept?

Mr Long: There has been a long delay in really getting a substantial response to our proposal at this point in time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wonder if we can ask, through the ministry, what the government's response is. Is it the Ministry of Education that would have received information on this or would it be the Office of the Premier? Where would we best direct ourselves to find out what the status of the province's response is to that?

Mr Long: Certainly we have written to the Premier, the minister responsible for native affairs and also to the Minister of Education on this subject.

The Chairman: Mr Brumer, would you like to come up to the microphone, and perhaps we can address a question to you as to whether you are aware of the ministry's role.

Mr Brumer: My understanding is that there are currently negotiations under way relating to the tripartite negotiations. There is a representative of the ministry—I believe it is Mark Larratt-Smith—who is involved in the negotiations, because a lot of this deals with education. There is a series of meetings taking place. There was some delay, I believe, because the Ontario commissioner has just changed, so that has caused some delays as well. There are also a number of different submissions from the various different organizations in Ontario, so they are not

all one coherent submission to which we can respond at one shot.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Would it be possible for us to get some kind of overview of the various kinds of submissions that have been brought forward by the various bands or treaty organizations, whichever it happens to be, and where that stands—just a one-page update, if you have done that kind of thing, or even longer; but not immediately, in the course of our hearings? That would be useful information to have before we look to recommendations.

Mr Brumer: I will certainly address this to the branch in the ministry that is responsible for handling this matter and get your response.

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Mr Long: May I follow up on that? I appreciate Mr Brumer's comments on that matter. Ontario has two documents which were signed by first nations in Ontario, one in 1985 called the Declaration of Political Intent, which was almost province-wide, and the other in 1986 called the Canada/Ontario/Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Memorandum of Understanding with 40-some communities across the north. We have some concerns that in three to four years not a great deal has transpired as a result of those accords; hence, the concern for direct negotiations with our seven communities so that progress can be made.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Another matter I have raised in the past in other dealings with that, on other legislation, has been to do with governance and the questions of accountability and governance. Actually, we were just chatting before the afternoon session began around the question of representation by native communities on public boards where they may have a number of students enrolled. There is, under legislation, a maximum of two representatives who can be on any public board at this time. I know members of the committee were involved in debate around this in the past, and the ministry is looking at trying to make that slightly more progressive than it has been in the past.

I wonder if you could just describe for us what the situation is with the Timmins board at the moment in terms of representatives of the population who are using the school system.

Mr Blake: If I can go back, perhaps, a little bit in history, the Timmins Board of Education at one point ran the largest French-language secondary school in the province, *Thériault école secondaire*. With the extension of funding to Roman Catholic secondary schools, that particu-

lar unit was transferred out of the jurisdiction of the Timmins Board of Education into the jurisdiction of the Timmins District Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Just at that point, there were legislative changes that resulted in—notwithstanding the fact that the school had been transferred and there were no French-language students—the Timmins Board of Education being required to have five trustees to represent zero students. At the same time, we are permitted to have, and in fact did appoint, one native trustee to represent the interests of approximately 140 native students who come down from these coastal communities.

With the new legislation and with the amendments to the Education Act that resulted, and the desire of the French-language section of the Timmins Board of Education, an elementary French-language school was started, but under the new legislation we were required to have the minimum of three and we had 40 students enrolled in a French-language school. Again, at the same time we are permitted to have one native person to represent approximately—at that point I believe it had grown to about 150 native students.

But I am not quarrelling with the legislation as far as the representatives of the French-language education council are concerned, or the French-language section, as it is now called. I am simply comparing on the one hand the treatment of our native people with that accorded to the French-language section of the board.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you tell us a little about how you went about appointing the one representative?

Mr Blake: The one representative is appointed by the native people, and is simply appointed to our board and then takes his place at the board table.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How does that work? Given that they are coming from various communities, one would presume, who makes the decision about how that appointment is made? Do you know? Or do they all come from—

Mr Blake: There is a practicality involved here, and one of the things I would hope, having spent a considerable amount of time in northern Ontario, is to try to convey the immensity of the distances involved and the costs of simply bringing people together. From Timmins to Peawanuck is a greater distance than from Windsor to the Quebec border, and in that area we are dealing with roughly seven communities. The cost to go from Moose Factory to Peawanuck is \$517 for one person.

So the cost of having a representative sit on the Timmins Board of Education is a tremendous cost to the native communities, and obviously they are concerned about saving money. So the practicality of it is that the Mushkegowuk Council normally would appoint a person who lives either in Timmins or fairly close to Timmins. This raises another problem of the degree of representation that person could provide, given the distances and the costs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Fascinating. Thank you very much.

Two other things: There has been a lot of work done about the effects of the old residential schools on family structures, and the ability of the communities themselves to continue, in many native communities in the north, in terms of child welfare impacts of our past policies. Have you done any studies on the effect on the native kids who come out of their communities to Timmins, in terms of either educational outcomes or other kinds of complications that may result in that pretty major upheaval; for somebody coming out of a small community—with no traffic lights, I think you said to me—who comes into a school that is as big as his whole community was?

Mr Blake: Madam Chair, His Honour Lincoln Alexander is experiencing that today, and I am sure if you talked to him when he comes back he would have the same type of impression I have had, and the great wonderment when you are dealing with a 13-year-old child and taking him out of a community of 1,000 people, where there is obviously little in the way of traffic problems and no traffic lights, and in a matter of three or four hours bringing him into a city the size of Timmins, which to him is probably, in his mind at least, larger than Toronto; and the very next day putting him in a school that is larger than his whole community, then having to provide the type of support services that are necessary, bearing in mind that the first language of these young students is Cree, not English.

So they are now in a school where the first language is English and they are next door to the largest French-language secondary school in the province. The confusion and the problems in those very, very difficult teenage years are incredible. The studies that have been done, and I am sure your research officers are fully aware of them, indicate that the likelihood of completing secondary school compared to a student in Toronto or compared to a student in other parts of the province is just not there.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the likelihood of completing in comparison with the option of staying at Moose Factory—or was it Moosonee? I cannot remember—the local school.

Mr Blake: But that is not a local school; that is 400 or 500 miles away. The problems are as great to take a child—say many of the parents I have talked to in the actual communities—and move him to Moosonee, which is not Moose Factory. Putting him in Moosonee is a worse fate than putting him in Timmins or in North Bay. The differences, in travel time, the distances in returning to their home, are negligible.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The final question I have is on the comments about lack of community-trained native educators. That is a little disconcerting. I wonder if you could go into a bit more detail, either about what other provinces have done, because I gather you are saying we are lagging behind what other jurisdictions have done in this area, or specifically what proposals you put forward in terms of improving the number, I presume, of native teachers and the quality of the training.

Mr Long: Certainly. In all the schools on the coast of James Bay there is one native teacher, who is a principal, at Attawapiskat. As you know, we are facing a very large teacher shortage in the years ahead. There is also a strong interest in the communities in first-language instruction. We believe that programs such as exist in northern Quebec and northern Manitoba, which are community-based so that teacher-training is less disruptive of community life and family life, can produce fully qualified, degree-holding native teachers who can staff these schools and can serve as positive role models for the students in the schools as well. We have completed our design, and we will be beginning to lobby faculties of education and hopefully be able to institute such a program, because it is very definitely required.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you send a copy of your design to the committee for us to have a look at?

Mr Long: Certainly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wonder if research can maybe get us some information on what is happening in Quebec and Manitoba. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mrs O'Neill: First, gentlemen, I thank you for coming. I think most of us who have not had the advantage of dealing on a one-to-one basis with your situation need all the help we can get to try

to come to an understanding of your concerns and your needs. Several times in this committee I feel we have been presented with the very best from people like you who are presenting these concerns to us.

I feel there are several very constructive ideas in your brief. I would like you to tell me a bit more about some of them, if you would, please. You say this year—I presume this school year just starting—that you are trying the distance education with six credits. Could you tell us a little about the subject areas you are using for the distance education?

Mr Long: Certainly. This is an initiative of the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board in Moosonee, which has a student enrolment of about 250. That board has a unique governing structure in that instead of having the two Indian trustees maximum allowed by legislation, it actually has representatives from Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany and Moose Factory, so it is a school board which has the majority of its members coming from Indian first nations.

Mrs O'Neill: How does that happen? Is that a popular electorate choice?

Mr Long: When the school was initially designed, the regulation setting out the designation of the board provided for that so that it could become a regional school. Up until this year, the school has served Moosonee and Moose Factory alone for all intents and purposes, and students from Moose Factory, during spring breakup and freeze-up during the fall, are helicoptered over to Moosonee two miles on Monday morning, spend the week there in a former armed forces barracks, have a recreation program and so on, and then come back Friday afternoon.

What it has meant since that school opened is that students in the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory have been able to stay at home and be part of a family group for a much longer period of time. Two years ago we assisted the bands on the James Bay coast to negotiate a tuition agreement with the James Bay Lowlands board. As a result of having that tuition agreement in place, we had the representation; and because of that representation, I think the school's focus has shifted farther north. It is a very significant initiative in trying to serve the needs of those students.

They are doing that by having a local tutor in each of the communities and having a staff person based in Moosonee who can really have supervised correspondence courses operating out of Moosonee. That is a brand-new program.

Mrs O'Neill: Could you tell us the subject areas?

Mr Long: I believe there are three grade 9 credits and three grade 10 credits. They are academic credits, like mathematics and English.

Mrs O'Neill: Are the tutors qualified?

Mr Long: They are just being recruited at this point. What they are looking for, I think, is someone the communities feel will have the trust of the students, who is not necessarily a qualified teacher. They are almost like an academic counsellor, a paraprofessional.

Mrs O'Neill: Please send the results of that to whomever you think most useful here, whether members of this committee or members of the ministry you are in touch with. I really think that is something that could be quite full of potential.

I wondered if you would tell me a little more—on page 8—about second-level consulting and supervisory services; what you mean by that.

Mr Long: In the three years I have been involved in the planning for this transfer, particularly from the federal schools, I have been told over and over again by the communities that they do not want to create another bureaucracy with a top-down approach. They want the authority to be in the communities, and yet they have realized the need for shared services, for example, special education consulting services which four communities should share, rather than each having its own. For example, if one community could not have its own music consultant, perhaps four communities together could. So they are looking at these kinds of services as a support to the communities. It is really a consulting service to the communities.

The experience in northwestern Ontario, where the first nations have gone this route of taking control, is that there is not really enough money there under the formula funding, and the first thing that has been cut is the second- or third-level service, the shared services for the schools.

Mrs O'Neill: In other words, anything with any focus or specialization?

Mr Long: Yes, particularly the curriculum development and adaptation.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. I found your appendix very interesting, your community education plan. It certainly is the ultimate in community involvement. Have you got any location for that yet, or is that still all on paper? Is there any place where that kind and level of community involvement is taking place?

Mr Long: I had the opportunity to attend the workshops in the community of Kashechewan about a year and a half ago. It is a very simple process, but it is a very beautiful process, because you get all the stakeholders involved in education in a small community—parents, elders, teachers—in different groupings talking about those seven areas, I think it is, and what the strengths and weaknesses are of the school. They brainstorm. Then this information goes to your local education authority, and they prioritize this and come up with a work plan. I believe, if it is not completely formalized, that the education authority in Kashechewan is in the final stages of producing such a blueprint for the school to follow and for the education authority to use, to evaluate what has gone on in the school over a given period of time.

The Chairman: If there are no other questions from members I would like to very much thank the Mushkegowuk Council—I hope my pronunciation has improved along the way—for offering a particular sensitivity on this issue. As you are well aware, many of our members are from the south and maybe do not have as many—

Mr Mahoney: Many are not.

The Chairman: Yes. We have on our committee several right now: Mr Miclash is from Kenora, Mr Kozyra from Thunder Bay, and—

Interjections.

The Chairman: I originally came from Matheson and went to school in Iroquois Falls. Actually, you did not need to come here. We all know—

Mr Mahoney: We all know the problem.

Mr Keyes: And I grew up on an island, so I know all about Moose Factory.

The Chairman: You have resensitized all the northerners on the committee. I did not even know this; it is like old home week here. You have sensitized us to many of the particular problems of the native communities. As a small girl from Matheson, I thought it was enough culture shock going from a town of 1,000 people down to the big university, but how much more compounded must that be when you are not talking about a middle-class person whose first language is English. We send out our sympathies and hopefully something more than that to the young Cree boy who has a real culture shock when he comes down.

If our committee can help in any way, I think maybe we too can make a contribution. We look forward to receiving the further materials you

have promised Mr Johnston, and we appreciate very much your contribution today.

Mr Long: Madam Chair, in answer to an earlier question by Mr Johnston, there is another document you may be interested in acquiring. It is a study completed a year ago, jointly funded by the province and the federal government, and it is entitled *A Northern Vision*. It is a study of secondary schooling north of the 50th parallel. I think you will be shocked by some of the statistics in there: Students living south of the 50th parallel have nine times the chance of completing secondary school.

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The Chairman: Dr Bob, if you can get that information for us.

Dr Gardner: Certainly.

The Chairman: The other statistic that shocked me was the one that said a native student had more chance of going to federal penitentiary than he did of attending university. I just found that totally unacceptable, as we all do, I think. Thank you for coming.

Dr Gardner has asked for just a couple of minutes to go over the education finance in the US document that he gave to us this morning.

Mr R. F. Johnston: To clarify some misconceptions, I am sure.

The Chairman: To clarify what some of the statistics actually mean and what some of them do not.

Mr R. F. Johnston: He does this after I have read it, so we can analyse this. It is putting me off totally.

The Chairman: Now you are confused.

Dr Gardner: Now is the test.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As long as it is not standardized, I don't care.

Dr Gardner: No, actually just a little sort of a methodological qualification, I guess, more than anything. In discussion with Representative Nelson, Mrs O'Neill noticed there was a—the document we have was prepared by an outfit called the Education Commission of the States. It is called *School Finance at a Glance*. They said that Minnesota had 556 school boards and Representative Nelson said there are 435. The reason, I presume, for the discrepancy is that this document was published in March 1988, which would mean that the data would likely be 1987, perhaps even earlier. So it is the best data available when they published this and it is the best we can get, but there are bound to be some differences in numbers, which is an important

thing to remember when you look at the stuff that, for example, we gave you in this book on the overall financing of elementary and secondary education in Canada.

The numbers will have been superseded and this is why we have the ministry giving us the best up-to-date numbers for Ontario. But the overall patterns and trends are quite reliable in data like these. We phoned all the different ministries across the country in all the different provinces, to make sure nothing had changed from this and to get the most recent data. But when we do give you stuff they are often—we are always confident of the overall patterns and trends. When you need precise numbers, that is when we phone the department or the ministry. That is just a little methodological qualification on the stuff we heard this morning.

The Chairman: Are there any questions?

Dr Gardner: I thought I saw Mr Johnston's raised eyebrow.

Mr Mahoney: So who is right?

The Chairman: Everybody.

Dr Gardner: We will take Representative Nelson on the detail and the commission on the patterns. No, we will not dispute that.

Mr Mahoney: I would like to seriously suggest that, at some time in the future, this committee consider perhaps travelling to somewhere like that to really experience the problems at first hand and maybe other places in the province where we could go as well; maybe even consider that being a subject of a report in its own right, the status of native education and what it is really like. I am sure we have all been to various parts of the province at a given time, but I think it would do everybody a lot of good, not only on the committee but in those communities, if we were to sort of take stock and look at some—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am not sure they can withstand our visit.

Mr Mahoney: We would try to be nice. I think it would be fascinating for us to do that and it may be helpful to come up with some recommendations of how we could help them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree. They have withstood floods and forest fire, and I think they could even withstand our visit. I take that back.

Mr Mahoney: Probably. We may have to get a few subs.

The Chairman: I do not know. This is probably a lot worse than a flood and forest fire.

Mr Mahoney: Although I would prefer to fly. I do not like submarines.

Mr Keyes: Madam Chair, I had a chance when I was Solicitor General to visit every one of those communities, but I always made sure I took a sideline visit to visit their schools. I think it is one of the greatest challenges facing Ontario, but it has been rent with so many political overtones when you are working with the federal government.

I visited those schools and I looked at the condition of them. One of the high schools they have been operating for maybe 10 years and they admitted they had yet to graduate their first native student. They are there and came out of the elementary system, but they went to grade 9, then a few dropped off from grades 10 and 11, and they still did not have their first graduate. The whole issue of trying to get native teachers for them is very difficult.

It is very true that in times of teacher—I hate to use the term “surplus”—but teacher surplus in Ontario, the young inexperienced teachers, unqualified to some extent or just newly out of school, are the ones who gravitate there in order to get some experience. But they spend the one year and so, just as the newspaper clipping here says, out of 43 teachers they expect at the end of the year 30 will move. It becomes very, very difficult to have continuity, and their programming to try to train their own native people is very, very difficult.

I think one of the biggest challenges facing Ontario is that we are really trying to integrate the native population into our society in a way that not only we think but also they think is more appropriate. It could be a whole topic, very highly charged politically, but a whole topic for this committee at another time when we look at native education in Ontario.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is hard to think how they can do it there without some role models. How do you start to get a greater percentage of kids to graduate the secondary system when they have so few role models of their own? This is real tough on them.

Mr Mahoney: The only role models they have got are because they could play hockey or something like that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We now have social welfare models of paraprofessionals delivering services for which in the south we require masters of social welfare or bachelors of social welfare at least. I fail to understand why I could not use the same kind of thinking in terms of education and actually get some good role models in place. It could be quite interesting to

see the model that they develop for us to have a look at.

Mr Keyes: To go back to the educational situation we had after the war in 1948, when I started teaching—

Mr R. F. Johnston: They let anybody in.

Mr Keyes: Anyone taught. I went teaching with a day's teacher training and I was proud of the fact that I survived 37 years in the system.

The Chairman: But did your students?

Mr Keyes: Every one of my students did. I know the first group of students that I had, and not one of them has not turned out to be successful despite my inability and the fact that I was 17 and my oldest student in year one was a grade 8 boy who was 16.

Mr Furlong: Both dating the same girls.

Mr Mahoney: They used to drive to school together.

Mr Keyes: We used to date the same grade 8 girl.

Mr Mahoney: The only one in the class.

Mrs O'Neill: Oh, I hope that is not on Hansard.

The Chairman: I see that the Advisory Council on Special Education has arrived.

Mr Mahoney: Just before you go on, I hope we would not lose that just in some file. Maybe the steering committee should discuss that potential—

The Chairman: I agree, Mr Mahoney. We have three members of the steering committee here right now.

Mr Mahoney: Okay. Someone can make a note because our memories are wonderful but short.

The Chairman: Yes. I think that is an excellent idea and it would certainly be an eye-opener for all of us. It is one thing to hear about it or to read it on a piece of paper; it is quite another to—

Mr Mahoney: To live it.

The Chairman: —see what is happening at first hand.

The Advisory Council on Special Education, would you come forward please and take a seat? Welcome to our committee. Mrs Nichols, it is nice to see you again. We always seem to have this ongoing affair going where we from time to time get together and meet you wearing various hats at various functions. We are very pleased to have you back.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs Nichols: Thank you very much. I am here in my capacity as chairman of the Ministry of Education Advisory Council on Special Education. With me are Mrs Walker, who sits on that council and who represents the Ontario Association for Bright Children, and Peter Beveridge who represents the OAEAO, the Ontario Association of Education Administration Officials.

What we are going to do is make a few comments. You are just having our written submission distributed to you, then the three of us will hopefully engage in dialogue with you and answer any questions that you may have.

The Ministry of Education Advisory Council on Special Education is a group that is appointed by an order in council. We are supposed to represent the majority of the stakeholder organizations in education. There are 17 members of council representing trustees, parents, supervisory officers, teachers, psychologists and social workers; in other words, most of the people who are involved with special education in the educational system.

In a way, we function as a special education advisory committee does with a school board advising the Minister of Education and the special education and provincial schools branch on a variety of matters, some of which they refer to us and others of which we raise ourselves because they are of concern to us.

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There probably is not any one issue that has appeared as much in front of council and in council's deliberation as the whole question of funding of special education. Because council was formed before the mandatory special education was introduced in 1980, clearly part of its original mandate was to discuss just exactly what was going to happen about funding of special education once it became mandatory throughout the province.

In the five years of implementation and in the four years since then, our interest really has not declined. We probably do not spend a great deal of time discussing whether the actual dollar amounts are adequate because of course, as you know, it is one of those things that if there were \$10 million more, there would be people who would say, "Well, let's have another \$10 million," and so on. We do not discuss so much the actual dollar amounts, but we do spend a great deal of time discussing how those dollars are spent, how they are allocated and how they are tracked throughout the educational system.

We also spend time discussing some philosophical issues such as, do the children who have been identified as exceptional get adequate value for those dollars that are spent on their education? If you were to ask me what the answer to that one is, I am not sure that we have a definitive answer, but we certainly talk about it a great deal.

This past year, in terms of funding, our major concern arose as a result of the general legislative grants that were introduced in the spring of this year. I am sure that many of you will remember that there was a significant change in the way the GLGs were structured this year, with special education being removed from being a direct grant based on the total enrolment of a school system and being brought into the general per pupil block grant under the ceilings.

When we first heard that this particular change was taking place, we expressed our great concern to Mr Ward, who was then Minister of Education. We in fact met with him. Perhaps things have not turned out quite as badly as council originally feared, but there is no question that there are a number of boards that have indicated to us that they see that as a sign on the part of the Ministry of Education that, in spite of the fact that the legislation has not yet been presented in the House or debated or voted upon, this is the first step towards a change of attitude towards special education. I must stress that this is not every school board by any means, but there is enough of it to give all of us a cause for concern whether we are a superintendent of special education or a representative of parent associations.

When the opportunity came to come and present to you, we pulled together a working group and decided that we would look at a fairly narrow range of issues and, again, we were not going to comment on the actual dollar amounts allocated to education; there will be others who will focus on that. We really felt that our mandate being in the area of special education, it should purely focus on that one item.

I certainly will not read to you everything that we have written, but what I would like to read to you is the four recommendations that we have put together. Although there are only the three of us here today, there has been consultation with all members of council so this really does represent council's position.

The recommendations are:

1. That special education grants once again become direct grants, outside of the grant ceilings for recognized ordinary expenditures, and be clearly identified in the body of the grant

regulations as a separate line, rather than remaining in the per pupil basic grant as introduced in 1989;

2. That full tracking of the special education grants be reinstated, such that school boards report to the Ministry of Education on the way they spend these funds, having prepared these reports in full co-operation and collaboration with their special education advisory committees;

3. That as part of the above tracking process, they report on the quality of education offered to exceptional pupils, thereby increasing the accountability of school boards within their communities;

4. That the Ministry of Education ensure that there continue to be adequate funds available for certain low-incidence and/or high-cost special needs, including such things as section 25 programs, assistive devices, services to nonverbal pupils, provincial demonstration schools, co-operative education programs and appropriate community-based programs for exceptional pupils.

I think I would like to stop there and allow your committee to ask us questions or make comments on the issues as raised by us.

The Chairman: I wondered if either Mrs Walker or Mr Beveridge would like to comment before we go to members' questions.

Mr Beveridge: No. You have the printed sheet there and you heard the comments by Eva. I do not think there is any necessity to elaborate. I think we had probably better respond to questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is good to see you again before the committee, keeping special education concerns in front of us as you have done in the past.

On Monday, I asked the minister's representatives whether they could provide for us some sort of information about board-by-board utilization of special ed grants that are given to them, on the basis that they get so many dollars per student enrolled, and what in fact is there. There is also the utilization. They are pulling together that information for us, which we will share with you, I am sure, when that becomes available. The clerk can send you a copy immediately.

I am interested, therefore, in the whole thrust of the four suggestions you are making, but basically 1 and 2, in terms of the question of accountability for provincial dollars spent on special ed and how various boards are interpreting their obligations under the act. I will not get

into some of the recent concerns that some of us have been having.

The phrase jumps out from your recommendation 2, which I thought I would just ask you about. If the ministry, even though it is now buried in the regular general legislative grant, can still pull out that information for us in terms of what each board is getting and what it is spending, then that gets over one of my concerns of what would also happen with the change in terms of the grants.

Those reports that will be made to us, will they have been made, do you think, in full co-operation and collaboration with the local special-ed advisory committee? The fact that phrase is in there makes me think that perhaps you were trying to identify something that is not taking place at the moment. If that is the case, I wonder if you can elaborate on it a bit more so we can understand whether the local committees are being bypassed, whether they are not being consulted sufficiently or what is taking place in terms of that accountability mechanism.

Mrs Nichols: First, if I may just answer the first assumption you made there, the fact is that when the work group that prepared this met with the people from the school business branch, the question we did ask is, "To what extent is the tracking going to be there, given that it is no longer a direct grant?" They certainly said to us that it really will depend a great deal more on the goodwill of the boards, because if the boards choose not to present in detail where they are spending those dollars, then they really do not have to. I think that is the concern we have, because we have already heard boards reporting to their special education advisory committees that there is no longer going to be any kind of reporting on financial matters because special education is no longer a direct grant that has to be tracked in that kind of way.

In terms of the second part of the question—and I am sure my colleagues here will both want to comment—I think the special education advisory committees, as they are established and when they work well, are probably one of the very best things about the whole business of special education legislation, because it really ensures a tremendous level of accountability and credibility in the community.

However, for them to be working well really relies on superintendents and directors of education who are willing to go the extra mile to make them work; and also representatives in the community who are able to function well and who are well trained and, of course, that is part of

our job as parent associations; and also trustees who will allow these people to participate in a truly advisory capacity. I think everybody recognizes they are not a decision-making body, they are not dictating to the school board, but there is a great deal of advice that can be given and is being given in some boards.

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In other places, we know that in spite of it now being 1989, there are special education advisory committees that have met maybe once or twice in the last four years. I am sure you may ask what we as organizations are doing about this. Of course, we do take it up with the Ministry of Education regional offices, but as you know, those regional offices can persuade but cannot insist. They are certainly aware that many school board SEACs are—it is almost a rubber-stamp situation: “Yes, we can tell the ministry that we took it to SEAC, but in terms of truly involving them as advisers, it is very patchy.” So one could really go from A to Z in terms of just how effective these groups are.

We are told that in the amendments you people are supposed to be seeing—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Amendments? Do you know something we do not? Last year’s amendments, do you mean?

Mrs Nichols: Those were the 1986 amendments, which you have not dealt with, but I believe you are going to deal with them this year.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This year? In 1989, you mean?

Mrs Nichols: Yes. That is the rumour that is around.

In all seriousness, I understand that the special education advisory committees’ status is supposed to be strengthened in what is being proposed and we feel very strongly that is in everybody’s best interests—the children, the parents, the boards and so on.

Mrs Walker: In terms of the interaction, co-operation and collaboration between boards and SEACs, I would agree with Eva in exactly how it is happening. In some boards it is working extremely well and I think everybody on both sides recognizes that who benefits, of course, are the children.

The concern that many members of our organization and others are expressing is that in the changes to the review, and the report that the boards must now make to the Minister of Education regarding special education programs and services, these have changed over the last few years. Particularly this year, we found that

boards that previously had been very open, accepting and willing of parent association representatives and SEAC members sitting on some of the committees that were taking a look at the report were pulling back and providing that report at a very late date to SEAC for approval in order to go to the board to be into the ministry on time.

It presents a real dilemma for those of us who represent parents on that committee, because we want to work co-operatively and collaboratively with the boards, but when we run into a roadblock like that and we attempt to work through the regional offices of the Ministry of Education to say, “How can we ensure, when this is happening, that we are supported?” we are seen somewhat as rednecks. Then some of those barriers begin to go down and we have to work to get past those barriers so we can work again. So we are very concerned about how the reporting is changing on what is just happening and our input to it.

Mr Beveridge: I think we have to be a little careful that we do not generalize a lot of these kinds of things, because I think there are degrees of accountability. There is a great deal of accountability at the local level and also there is some through the Ministry of Education, and I think we have to be fair about that.

The annual report does take into account a lot of the things and there have been some changes over the years with respect to the kinds of things that are reported, but at the same time you have to get approval from the Ministry of Education for section 25 programs. So there is a great deal of accountability there, really not a great deal in terms of the block grants, the ones that came through the GLGs for every student in the system. So there may be room for additional tracking and accountability in that area.

In lieu of grants, again, you have to get approval there, so there is some degree of accountability there. The trainable retarded grants used to be designated per pupil, so at that point there was accountability. That has changed a little now under the kind of block granting. The same thing with personalized equipment, you have to get approval before you can purchase. So in that respect there is some degree of accountability.

In terms of SEACs, I think they are as unique as every board in how they have grown up over the years. I know in my particular board, and I certainly cannot talk for every SEAC across this province, but in my particular board they are very interested in the new funding mechanism. In

fact, a report will be going to them in October and they will be very vigilant in terms of what is happening, and I imagine very vocal if they are not too happy. It will depend on the degree of observation and the degree of monitoring as these kinds of things evolve as to what the position of local boards will be. I just want to give a little bit of balance here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess some of those are the basics. When do these reports usually have to be filed with the ministry?

Mr Beveridge: By 15 May.

Mr R. F. Johnston: When you talk about some of these coming very late to a SEAC or a board, which is either just late getting the information together or is not very co-operative, whatever might be behind it, what are we talking about? Are we talking about something maybe coming in April or May—

Mrs Nichols: Or May or June.

Mr R. F. Johnston: After the fact.

Mrs Walker: In addition, sometimes it is a matter of the committee getting a copy of the report, which could be up to 50 to 150 pages, maybe two days before, sometimes not that long, prior to the need for approval because it will be going to the board the next meeting.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is no standard date that is established that it must go before a SEAC. I see. Okay.

Mr Beveridge: I think, Mr Johnston, most boards would try to target for about March or back it up really to February, to take it to SEAC and give the committee an opportunity to digest that because they have to take it to the full board for approval. This is a board policy kind of report that has to be submitted not from the administration but from the board itself. That would usually go to the March-April meeting and then be forwarded on to the ministry by the date of 15 May. I do not doubt that there are other boards that exceed that or are outside of that specific target date.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, but there is a regulatory function under the act and one would presume there is the date that they have to file with the ministry and there is no sort of accompanying regulation which gives sort of status to the SEAC consultation, so that it becomes more than a rubber stamp. At the moment, there is nothing like that.

Mrs Walker: There is a statement that SEAC should be involved throughout the process.

Mrs Nichols: But not a specific date saying that SEAC has to have looked at it by 31 March if it is to be submitted to the ministry by 15 May.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Johnston. We have quite an extensive list of speakers: Mrs O'Neill, Mr Kozyra, Mrs Cunningham and Mr Keyes.

Mrs O'Neill: I am really sorry that things have not improved as I might have hoped they would. I experience some of the frustrations you are talking about at the moment, and if they are escalating or accumulating, I am certainly not happy about that. I have also always had difficulty with the way in which boards report. I see this as one of—not your recommendations but accountability on the part of school boards for the way special education dollars are spent.

I am just wondering if your advisory committee has ever developed any models. I know some boards do and I have actually got tapes of people who are experts there to say they are experts in this field and how it can be done well and all of the rest of it. But I am just wondering if you as a group, because you do represent all of the exceptionalities, have ever developed a model that could be placed with boards.

I think this whole area of educational finance can either be very abused or certainly be very misunderstood, and both of those bother me terribly. I do not think there is a lot on the other side where they are done intelligently and with a great deal of—what should I say?—focus on what is actually happening. Could you tell me that first?

Mrs Nichols: No, we have not, although it has certainly been discussed over the six years that I have been involved with council. We always come up against the fact that of course school boards have a tremendous amount of autonomy, as you know, and who are we collectively to dictate to school boards?

That is the comment that comes up and we have always shied away from actually coming up with something that would be seen as dictating to school boards. But we will certainly take it under advisement and I will take that one back to council, whether in fact council should take on that task to try to develop—

Mrs O'Neill: A reporting model that you could give to the executives of trustee associations, directors of education. Maybe a few of them would find it helpful. I just feel that there is some way in which this can be done. I do not think we have yet arrived.

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If I may go to the next page, I am quite interested to see—and because you are out there in the field more certainly than I am at the present time in this area, could you tell me what has happened immediately with the change in grants in the format for retrainable retarded? Has there been any immediate effect within the educational system in the way in which we are—you likely know some of the political pressures that went into that decision. What would you suggest is happening there?

Mr Beveridge: I do not think it has really sunk in to the extent yet because of the short time line. This has just occurred recently. I know that our council has talked about that because they have spread this right across the system, much the same as you do for other areas of disability before you had a specific designated sum, which was much greater, like \$6,000 for a trainable retarded youngster. That, plus the general legislative grants, you are in the ballpark for what it costs you to educate one of these youngsters, which could be anywhere from \$9,000 to \$13,000. It was not totally appropriate, but it was there.

I have not heard any immediate feedback from other superintendents or from people at the board level, but as I had just said a few minutes ago, we are going to be discussing this with our SEAC, I think in October.

Mrs O'Neill: It would seem to me again that it would be an area where data collection would be very helpful, just to see how programming is changing, how apparent the choices are changing, because it is quite a fundamental change to a group of clients who have been identifiable, I suppose, as the original group of special education people. That is why I would certainly like to keep up to date on what effect it is having on service in the schools.

The other situation that you have mentioned there on your page before your recommendations is summer school. Certain summer programs for exceptional pupils were affected. I thought those were the ones that were left untouched. Can you tell me the ones that were touched? I understood that one of the criteria for not touching was that they would be something to do with special education or had some component of remediation. I am quite surprised to see here that you are suggesting that there were some of the programs that serve our more disadvantaged students and the programs for the gifted.

Mrs Walker: The summer enrichment programs were one of the areas that were cut that we as an organization were concerned about. Not

necessarily because it is all gifted children who are involved, and very often it is not. What we have found in discussing with boards and administrators and parents of many children is that those children who have been in a summer enrichment program, which is in a school setting, it has provided an area where they have had success in a school setting. For many of them, it is not in an academic area as they usually have it within a school year, but they have had success in a school setting and come back with a better self-concept and very often feel a lot better about school when they come back in the fall.

It is very interesting because we are getting from various sectors of the community out there that the taking away of the funding of summer enrichment programs has been a concern. There are a number of boards that are continuing to fund them on their own, but where boards, and one in particular is in your area, in the Ottawa area, started to charge, the numbers of children involved dropped dramatically.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you have a definition of enrichment?

Mrs Walker: Enrichment is not gifted programming and gifted programming is not enrichment.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay.

Mrs Walker: I think that is the thing that we really have to be very careful about.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess what I wanted you—

Mrs Walker: Enrichment is anything that is stretching, is going to allow the children to go beyond—

Mrs O'Neill: It would be something different than general interest?

Mrs Walker: It should be, yes. Absolutely.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay.

Mrs Nichols: May I just add one other thing? Another area where it did arise in terms of summer programming is that some children who are in special education during the summer attend programs offered through the children's mental health centres. I know that really falls more into the treatment area than strictly education. In the past, the parents were assisted with funding for transportation to those programs because usually it is the identification and placement review committee that recommends that the child attend that program.

This summer we had a number of situations where—for example, programs offered by the Integra Foundation, which is a specialized children's mental health centre for children who

have learning disabilities. The families could not enrol their children in spite of the school board's recommendation that they would benefit from it because taxi service, say, from Orangeville to the Integra program would have cost the family around \$1,500 or \$1,800, which in some instances is beyond the family and there was no way of getting that funded. We managed to get some service club funding, sort of on an individual basis, for a week. In fact this particular youngster we were agonizing over could not attend the full program, but it arose for a number of other children, so we were assisting families in setting up car pools and that sort of thing.

It is not that it is wrong for us as an organization to be doing that, but I do think that where it is the recommendation of the school board that a child participate in such a mental health type program during the summer it is a great shame if the funding is not available to assist the family with transporting their child there.

Mrs O'Neill: That is a Metro Toronto program, is it?

Mrs Nichols: It is a Metro program, but Integra is a unique children's mental health centre and its catchment area in terms of some of its summer programs is province-wide. It has the one summer camp funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for children with learning disabilities. That is residential, of course, but some of the day programs certainly bring in children from almost anywhere in the Golden Horseshoe, and for the first time the parents have to find the transportation themselves.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: Before we finish your line of questioning, I wanted to mention for the benefit of the presenters and the members that Mr Brumer from the Ministry of Education has said that he is happy to answer any questions or make any comments if you have anything on the technical side of this funding of special education that you require more information about. Please feel free at any time to call upon his services this afternoon.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is another comment here.

Mr Beveridge: Just a point of clarification: The one area that really survived budgetary restrictions through the kinds of things we are talking about now is remedial math and remedial reading. They survived, but with the other

things, it seems we have lost a lot of funding in terms of other programs that were very beneficial and very valuable to young people in our community.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. I presume you dealt very extensively at your meetings with your first recommendation regarding identifying these grants again. You did not put that there lightly.

Mrs Nichols: No.

Mrs O'Neill: I know why you have done it, but I guess I feel that we should deal with the reality, not with what was there. I am asking you to be more creative in developing those models and the things I mentioned earlier in trying to work within this, because I think you know, and certainly when you met with the minister he must have suggested, that there were many reasons why the funding went the way it did and the way it has been broken out. In some cases it had some very positive effects, in that you say special education is very much part of the system and it is not an add-on, so to speak, and that every one of these children has the right to reach his full potential like every other child.

The other recommendation, the tracking, I take more comfortably. As to the SEACs, I hope you are continuing to have your good conferences where you whip everybody into shape and show them all the possibilities.

Mrs Nichols: We try.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope you will continue that because I do think, as you said earlier, we have to have very responsible people on those committees, people who are willing to make a commitment and who really serve their communities, not just the disability in which their own interest lies but all disabilities and/or potentials.

Mr Kozyra: I would like you to focus on your first recommendation—basically the general recommendation, special education, direct grants and ordinary expenditures and so on—in conjunction with a very specific example, as a personal example.

My wife has been in special education for the last 12 years of her 24 years of teaching, the first six in the slow-learner category and the last six with the gifted. In my estimation, from what I have heard about her problems with the system, they have very little to do with funding and grants and so on, but it is the attitudinal thing towards any of these programs called "special." Where normally in our language "special" takes on special and positive attitudes, unfortunately within the school concept and very unfortunately within that of colleagues, teachers and princi-

pals, the special becomes a stigma and a barrier, rather than something to work with something positive. That has been over the years the biggest problem, rather than all the funding and so on.

I am wondering whether your recommendations are one, two, three tiers above that, addressing that in some way, or whether they have any relationship to it or not, whether this is a problem in isolation? Frankly, from what I hear and so on, I do not think it is. It has something to do with human nature. I am wondering if it has any relation whatsoever to your recommendations of grants and the language you use to describe it?

Mrs Nichols: It would seem to me the issues within the schools and classrooms do not tend to relate to funding. I think you are probably quite right. When you talk to a teacher who teaches a classroom full of children with special education needs, you do not hear from them, "If there was a little bit more money." That is not the issue. It is more attitudes and that kind of thing.

The reason why we felt very strongly that we wanted to go back to the direct grant—and maybe that was not very creative of us, but that is what we came up with—was because we felt that seemed to be a way, and probably not the only way, of making sure that there would be some visibility for special education needs.

The fact is that if it is less visible it does not take away the kind of stigma that you are talking about because that is a function of educating the people involved and creating more positive attitudes.

When the minister spoke to us about how he saw the visibility continuing he said we did not need to worry because there would still be the letter to the chairman of the board. So that is not something that really goes everywhere, whereas the documentation on the general legislative grants is much more widespread, much more widely reported. That seemed to be the way we came up with to make sure that people do not interpret this particular action as a sign that special education is on the way out. We have done Bill 82. You sometimes hear that comment. We have done Bill 82, now let's get on with other things.

That gives all of us cause for concern because the fact is that tremendously good things have happened to an awful lot of youngsters, but it is not something where we can say, "It has been done; now we can get on with something else and forget about it."

Mr Kozyra: I guess specifically what I am asking is, how do you translate the recommenda-

tions into some kind of action that will correct an attitude of a principal who says, "I don't believe in gifted education or that program"? Can you translate this into that front-line problem?

Mrs Nichols: I am not sure one could say there is a direct translation from this to that, but I would say any principal or trustee or superintendent or anybody else who says "I don't believe in gifted education" or special programming for children who have attention deficit disorder or whatever needs to—

Mr Kozyra: Believe me, they do say it.

Mrs Nichols: I am aware of that. I was just trying to think how to put it in acceptable terms.

Mr Kozyra: We have to educate the educators.

Mrs Nichols: Certainly you have to educate the educators. You have to improve attitudes and you have to present information to them that makes them realize that it is in everybody's best interests; that child certainly, but other children as well, and the teaching staff and everybody else. It is a big task.

Mr Kozyra: I was just wondering whether your recommendations somehow encapsulate some of that.

Mrs Nichols: I am afraid not. I do not think so.

Mrs Walker: I think we attempted to stick strictly to funding in this. I think every one of us, in whatever capacity we serve on the advisory council and other places, is always working with whoever we can to change attitudes. Certainly Mrs Nichols and I have talked, and the goal of our organization should be to be out of existence, because then everybody would be understood and accepted and the attitudes would be positive for all children.

So if that is our long-term goal, we will keep working towards the attitude of changing.

Mrs Nichols: How about that principal, Peter?

Mr Beveridge: I think in the big picture on this one there is sort of a mixed message here. We all advocate providing suitable and appropriate programming for all exceptionalities. We are committed to that. My board has been in the business since 1910, so we are not exactly neophytes in terms of the kind of services that you provide for people. A lot of principals and teachers have grown up in this and they are conditioned to this.

The place where I think some of the concern is is the mixed message. When you fold it into the ceilings and you do not have specific designated dollars, maybe there is a message out there that

all of these youngsters should be integrated into regular classes, etc. I think we have a pretty strong commitment to a continuum of intervention strategies and a continuum of services.

We agree more and more that more youngsters can be served within the regular stream, but not everybody. I think that really reflects the philosophy of our Ministry of Education. We believe it is the right philosophy. But when you see moneys being rolled in and integrated into regular granting structures it makes different people think of what comes next. Eva is quite right. People may be saying: "Look, is much of special education as we now know it obsolete? Is it on its way out?" We know that is not the case. You are always going to have youngsters who need highly specific programs with specific methodology and technology relative to providing that kind of support.

I think that is one of the basic reasons why we think we need identifiable, designated dollars for special education youngsters or we may see those dollars and programs disappear in the future.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Kozyra. I am following your reasons why you would like it to again become the direct grant system. What I am wondering about is the opposite, why the Ministry of Education changed it to begin with. I do not know whether it would be appropriate for Mr Brumer to comment on this.

Mr Brumer: In 1980, when we first developed the funding model for funding special education, after discussing it with a number of boards in the pilot project exercise, we came up with the idea of allocating the money to the boards on the basis of a dollar amount per pupil.

Between 1980 and 1985, the Education Act read that "a board may provide special educational programs," with the other proviso that effective September 1985 "a board shall provide special education programs."

So as of 1985 it went from being a permissive exercise to a mandatory exercise. The funding on a per pupil basis started in 1982, when the government stipulated that boards would be getting dollar amounts per pupil enrolled to carry out their obligations regarding special education, an increasing amount in recognition of the increasing levels of service that would be provided. This went up until 1985 and then after 1985 it was an incremental basis in relation to inflation.

Once it became mandatory it became part of the integral responsibility of the school board. The amount of money was a flat amount per pupil enrolled, so that you had a regular amount to be

recognized, for instance \$3,000, and an amount for special education of \$200.

In line with the restructuring of the funding, all those programs that are the responsibility of the board as stipulated in the Education Act and in the regulations have been compiled into category 1, which is a base amount for a base responsibility of the board as stipulated in the act and the regulations. So that was the whole essence, that we would combine the two.

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The other aspects of it are that what we found over time was this idea that said we are not going to provide any more special education programs because we are out of money. We have a small pot. We have so much money for special education and when we are out, we are out; we quit. That is not what the Education Act says, so that is one part of it.

The converse that was raised earlier is that if you cannot identify how much money there is, it makes it very difficult for interest groups to pressure the boards to say, "Hey, keep providing more programs." There is that aspect of it and it is a double-edged situation."

The other thing was that there was a clear distinction between regular programming and special education programming. There was a regular group of pupils and there was a special education group of pupils. The original intent when Bill 82 was introduced was to ensure that every child, regardless of exceptionality, received an adequate level of educational programming. It did not state that there was one category here and another category there, so we felt that this should be combined.

The other part of it was that when we originally went through this exercise in 1980-81, at that time it was felt that the money should be segregated in terms of a clearly identified pot during the interim phase and the transition period until it became mandatory, and then subject to revision at that time. So that is what we did.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In discussion with the ministry the other day, though, I had the sense that no evaluation had been done as yet in terms of how the boards, over the period, say, from 1985 to now, have actually been using their bucks. It strikes me as a bit strange. Am I wrong about that? I was told that information was available and that kind of tracking really should be done; that is what the officer said to me that day. Am I wrong?

Mr Brumer: We do know from school boards, we get their financial statements and there is an entry in the financial statement as to

how much money is spent on special educational programs.

Mrs O'Neill: Certainly the annual plans are there.

Mr Brumer: The annual plans are there. There has been a number of exercises undertaken regarding tracking. When we first entered into this, the Association for Large School Boards in Ontario, the Ontario school business officials, a number of other agencies and the ministry, looked at mechanisms that would sort of say how much money does a board have for special education; how much money is the board spending for special education.

While it was perfectly feasible to develop a mechanism from an accounting perspective as to how to do those two parts of the ledger, it became extremely difficult to determine exactly what programming elements should be included. So if you went to a board and you said, "Prove to us that you spent all the money on special education," it would be quite able to submit a financial statement stating that all of that money has been spent.

Only through a review of a program and in an in-depth analysis of the program could one try to see whether or not the dollars that were considered to be in expenditures were really in the area of special education, and even then it is a highly subjective matter. When we first started with the plan, during the phase-in period and even now—but mostly during this phase-in period—school boards were required to submit plans on how they were going to implement their special education programs.

In an analysis of some of these plans and in some of the statements we received, we had boards that came up and said, "There just is not enough money for special education; look at all this expenditure." When you went in and you read the plan, you discovered that every guidance counsellor in every school was included in special education costs; attendance counsellors, which have been required by law, for many, many years, long before special ed, were part of the special education costs. Psychologists became part of the special education costs. A percentage of the principal's salary became part of the special education costs.

Without getting into a very detailed mechanism that said, "This is what you may count as special ed and this is what you may not count as special ed, and these staff are included and these staff are not," it is almost impossible to do a cost accounting.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess that just points out a major problem I have with it being mainlined under the legislative grants at the moment, if at this stage we really do not know whether or not the boards have been using it for appropriate purposes, in a large sense. In the way you are describing things, it certainly sounds as if some may have been rationalizing their usage of the dollar in an incorrect fashion. Then there is a huge danger with now putting it, in a hidden fashion, totally within the general legislative grant. Surely we should have done that kind of analysis and enumeration of what is useful and tried to use the special education advisory committee or whatever as a means of coming up with a consensus on what is acceptable costing before we make that kind of grant—which can then, rightfully I think, make the special education advisory committees and others feel a little nervous about what kind of control there is going to be on the bucks in the future.

Mr Brumer: First of all, I did not mean to imply and would not imply that any board was misusing the money. I was simply saying that some of those reports in the early phases, as a case in point, to make that gesture, that was the kind of thing that appeared.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is my point. We do not know whether they are using it appropriately or not.

Mr Brumer: If you want to start to look at the question of the appropriate usage, then what we end up with is that we have to start getting into the kind of situation that says, "For this and this type of exceptionality, the appropriate mechanism of serving those people is X." The matter of the trainable retarded person is a very good example of that.

What we said was that for a trainable retarded pupil who is enrolled in a class or school for trainable retarded, what that meant was a segregated setting with a teacher duly qualified in the field of the trainable retarded with no more than eight or 10 pupils in that class. That was the precise setting and what we got was a lot of static from boards saying that was not the only acceptable manner for serving trainable retarded pupils.

The point is that there is such a wide variety and range of philosophies regarding pedagogy; never mind regular education, special education is even broader. Unless the ministry were to actually get into a very precise mechanism that says, "This is what you shall do, what we can do, and this is where the SEACs come into it, to evaluate and see whether the boards are in fact

meeting the needs of the public and the pupils," there is a whole series of legal obligations. One says, "A board shall provide...." The identification and placement review committee permits a parent to raise the question before a special committee. If they do not like the placement, they can go to an appeal board.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We do not want to get into all that. If you get me started on the IPRCs and what a farce that whole appeal process has become, we will never get anywhere. All I guess I am pointing out is that I agree with you that if you try to delineate, there is a danger that you become restrictive. Your example of the trainable retarded is a perfect example. What I am pointing out is that the other side of it is just as dangerous; you have boards alleging to be providing adequate funds for special education, and given especially the way the IPRC and the appeal process goes, and our having no control at this point over knowing whether or not that is being well spent and now it is being submerged under the general legislative grants before we really do know.

I am not saying it is being badly handled. Most boards probably can rightfully say they are having to spend more money on special education than they are actually getting. That argument has been made a great deal and it has some resonance to it. I can understand why the SEACs are nervous at this stage.

Mr Brumer: We have identified the money in the preface to the regulations, in that copy that you got, the handout. In the regulations, there is a yellow part which is the descriptive, a sort of the English version or a layman's version of the regulations, and then there are the regular regulations.

The Chairman: How did it work under the direct grant system? Did you have the same problems? Was it defined or delineated exactly what the special education money had to be spent on? Or did you have a similar type of problem where it was open-ended and they could put a psychologist in and spend the direct grant on that.

Mr Brumer: It is exactly as it is today. The only distinction is that where there was a special clause in the regulations that said a board shall receive \$215 per average daily enrolment, the ADE, and that was under a heading dealing with grants for special educational programs, and under that heading there was a clause that said a board shall be paid so much money per ADE. That was there.

Now that is no longer there. That is under the base amount, which says, "The recognized

amount shall be \$3,200," and that \$3,200 is in that. In the front, we have identified what the composition of that base amount is.

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Mrs Cunningham: Thank you for your presentation today. It seems to me that, in spite of the previous discussions, your group, which is to advise the Ministry of Education, has decided, obviously in spite of a lot of discussions around what you have been telling us, that you are still very much concerned about the change in the grant structure. Could I ask you, in your capacity as an advisory council to the ministry—that is my assumption—what inputs you had before this change was made?

Mrs Nichols: In fact, we had no input into this at all. The only thing that I am aware of happening was that some of us as individuals heard along the grapevine that this was in the works. Some of us wrote strongly worded letters to the minister, and I, as chairman of council, did write a letter to the minister asking if there was going to be any opportunity for us to dialogue with people before the general legislative grants were drafted. But in fact we did not have any kind of formal discussion about this proposal prior to its being presented. We had it presented to us on the same day. The directors of education and chairmen of boards were going to have it in the afternoon; we had it in the morning.

Mr Mahoney: It is like being in government caucus.

Mrs Cunningham: You should know that, as some of my colleagues in all parts here have been, I myself have been very much a part of the writing of Bill 82 as a school board trustee and chair of the special education advisory committee for the London Board of Education and I was hoping that that particular advisory committee was back to the board; that was always my great expectation as an elected person and certainly as a parent of a special child.

I am very concerned to read this today. I was wondering what you were coming here to tell us. I am very concerned about the interpretation you put on it, if the boards are reading that, because as the representative, Mr Beveridge, stated, sure, some boards should be given wonderful credit for what they have been able to do. Your group is more concerned about the boards that really have not run with this whole wonderful program that the ministry has told us is law. So I am really concerned if we have taken a step backwards around the interpretation and that is that special education either is not as important or should be

eliminated. Anyway, I agree with your observations.

Just from my own work, I would have thought the separate line for special education in any budget was an easier one to look at and the only one that our group looked at when we were talking about accountability. It was an easy one for us to take the pieces and put it together. I think we probably fell into the category as described by the representative of the ministry, and that is, that we had things in there that we probably should not have had, but we learned over a period of time how to do it, what the formula ought to have been, not that anybody was perfect, but we were expecting some feedback.

I wonder then, given your concerns right now, if you will be pursuing these with the special education advisory committees across the province? Will you be looking for their input, from individual boards, on this particular matter?

Mrs Nichols: I think we cannot comment on that in terms of council very easily, because council does not directly communicate with the advisory committees. However, all of us who sit on council have contact with one, or in the case of the parent associations, numerous special education advisory committees. I can assure you, for example, that for the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario—and you will be hearing from us as a separate group tomorrow morning—we have alerted the 86 people who represent us on 86 SEACs about the importance of this and have provided them with the material we are presenting to you tomorrow so they can take it to their boards, if for no other reason but to make sure the boards realize that there are an awful lot of people watching very carefully to see if this is what the legislation says today, how is it actually going to work in each community.

Mrs Cunningham: Just an editorial comment here. I would think, given the concerns you have brought before the committee around how the SEACs are working differently in many boards, how they are listened to and whether or not they are really taken seriously as advisory committees, you should be making a very strong statement to the minister around how much you are listened to when changes are made at the provincial level, given that you also are supposed to be an advisory committee. One hopes that when they give up their time in your capacity, they are at least listened to.

I would raise that concern. Madam Chairman, I would ask you to raise that concern as well. That is a concern that I think all members share. If this group is telling us that the SEACs are not

always treated with open respect by individual boards as advisory committees, certainly the advisory committee to the ministry should be consulted and listened to. All of us expect to do that, and I would ask you, Madam Chairman, to raise that concern in the appropriate manner, given your position as chairman of this committee.

The Chairman: I am not sure it would be appropriate for me as chair to make a decision on behalf of all the committee members to do so, but I certainly know that Mr Brumer is here from the ministry and he will be passing on the comments. If all committee members would like me to do it, I would be happy to.

Mrs Cunningham: Maybe we could discuss it as a group at an appropriate time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Before we do that, I am wondering whether the ministry has done any kind of review of the SEACs and how they have been operating in terms of the number of meetings, concerns that have been raised by individual SEACs with the ministry about their relationship with boards, positive things that have come back or whether individual associations have done that kind of thing.

Mrs Nichols: Individual associations have. We certainly have surveyed our SEAC people, and if it would be of interest to this committee we would happily share that with you. I believe other organizations have done the same thing with their SEAC representatives.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In terms of an accountability mechanism that we are talking about here, it is very important to know at this stage, after four or five years of official operation, just how that is working, so that when the regulatory and perhaps legislative changes come forward in the fullness of time we will be able to have that as a base of information. Certainly, from this committee's perspective on the financing of education and the question of accountability, it would be interesting to get some sort of a view at this stage of how this kind of accountability mechanism has worked.

Mr Keyes: I will be very brief, because I think we have kind of beaten the philosophy of it. What I wanted to get out of the committee people was for them to give me a stronger philosophical basis for requesting going back to the line-by-line type of budgeting. One of the first things you asked was, and you deliberated over this, whether the funding for special education purposes was adequate. I think your comment, somewhat superficially, was, "We can always spend more

money if we get it because we can do that in any field, whether it is special education or any other field of education."

My concern was that if there was some feeling of reasonable adequacy, as much as there is in other fields, there should not have been quite the concern over lumping them together, because the change of regulations was explained very well by the ministry, that they must, they shall, provide special education. We were given the document the other day, which I am sure you are aware of, and we know that the figure for every student in the system was increased, so that for every student enrolled in elementary schools this year \$224 in the grant and \$160 for secondary school students, that, while rolled in, again it was explained, was the add-on to the per pupil grant.

I would have felt that this, philosophically, from the ministry's point of view, was to try to show how we are trying to integrate all forms of education. It did play up, though, the much bigger role SEACs must play in every board, because then it is up to them to be the watchdog on the boards, to be sure. That brings it back to the local accountability, that SEACs are the watchdog to see if we are providing an adequate special education program in this particular board.

You may have a comment on that or not. I felt the role was the right way to move them in and could not quite understand why you are so concerned about it.

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Mrs Nichols: I just want to tell you that when we started to work at the council on this, one of the things we did is we went around the table and we said: "Let's ask the question. Is anybody saying that the problem is inadequate dollar amounts?" While everybody said, "We know if there were more dollars then you could do this, that and the other," in fact there was not any one member of council who could say, "I hear from board X or board Y or SEAC Z that the big issue is inadequate dollars." I think that is why we did not focus on that, because we knew that if we said, "It needs more money," then you would say, "Who needs it, for what and how much?" We did not have an answer for you on that.

Mr Keyes: The other question arises in looking at the financing of education in general. While it probably was not in your role, have you looked at our system of financing as it is now on the property tax and commercial-industrial assessments or have you stayed totally away from that as you looked at financing? It appears you

zeroed in more just on the dollars and how we get the dollars in special education.

Mrs Nichols: As a council, we have not been looking at property tax, the pooling of assessments or any other of those things, because we felt there were too many pitfalls in that way.

Mr Keyes: Or personal income tax.

Mrs Nichols: We have really just focused on, given the dollar amounts, how they are spent for the benefit of exceptional pupils.

Mr Keyes: Would you agree that it really does provide a much enhanced role for the SEACs in every board, to be sure they are the ones who keep knocking on the door to see what the program is?

Mrs Nichols: Yes, that is quite true. It does, in fact that SEAC already has a role, but if the SEAC has virtually no role now then it is not likely to happen. Second, in the same kind of way Mr Johnston was asking about the evaluation of how the dollar amounts were being spent it really did seem a little bit of a cart-before-the-horse situation because—I am sorry, I will mention the word "amendments" again—there are supposed to be amendments. They may change things fairly dramatically. Some people know what is going to be presented, but none of us knows what is going to be approved.

Mr Keyes: 'Twas ever thus.

Mrs Nichols: Of course, but it really does seem sort of strange the way it is funded before you decide how you are going to change it. It sort of seems the wrong way around, and we certainly all seem to agree on that.

Mr Furlong: Was that brief?

Mr Keyes: I thought that was very brief.

The Chairman: Mr Villeneuve has sort of a supplementary but mainly a new question, so I think under those guidelines maybe I should go to Mr Mahoney first and then we will have your sort of new question.

Mr Mahoney: As everyone who has spoken here today has said, I will be brief. I will not be here tomorrow when you present your presentation from the learning-disabled perspective and we have exchanged views before on some of that stuff, but it seems to me that an unconditional grant to any level of government from the senior level of government is more conducive to local autonomy and changes in a local community than a conditional grant. I would view lumping it into the general legislative grants as making it an unconditional grant as opposed to conditional.

The problem then becomes one of accountability, which Mr Johnston has been talking about all week, and rightly so. If we cannot look to our elected representatives at the board level as being able to be held accountable for something like that, then I think that would be cause for concern. I think the program delivery, as opposed to how the dollars are delivered, is much more significant and important.

I notice your membership list here and first on the list is the Ontario Association for Community Living. The name change they underwent is an example of changing attitudes. The desire that I think most people in community living have to eliminate things like special Olympics and simply make it part of the Olympics is something I have talked to many people in my own community about.

I really do not like the terminology "special education." I understand the good work you do and I appreciate it, but I really think if we are going to change attitudes in our society, we have to get away from that connotation. I say that as a father who has experienced the damage it has done and seen the damage it has done in other areas in the community. I would like to know how we do ultimately change those attitudes in our educational system if we do not break away from that and everything it signifies.

Mrs Nichols: If I could tell you in five words or less how we can change all the attitudes, then probably I would be doing something really exciting for a lot more money than being here. I would be an inspirational speaker or something like that.

In all seriousness, I do not think any of us, including all members of this particular council, would disagree with you that attitudes are what it is all about. Certainly for the Ontario Association for Community Living, the ultimate goal for everybody is integration. After all, we have a world such as it is and we all have to live in it and that is what integration is about.

It is just that I think our representative from community living recognizes every bit as much as the rest of us that in order to achieve that ultimate goal of integration, there have to be an awful lot of things happening to and for the individual. The person has to acquire positive self-esteem, coping skills and all those sorts of things. How they do that may sometimes need what we currently call special education because we do not have any better words for it.

You and I have talked about how inadequate the words "learning disability" are, because it is

not just learning and it is not a disability, but we have the language as we have it.

I think if we focus exclusively on the fact that "special education" as a term should disappear, we do take the chance that the baby will go with the bathwater as well and, suddenly, children will not receive the kind of support they need. In an ideal world, the school system would provide for every child on a totally individual basis, whatever stage of development they are at, and not on a chronological basis. People could spend anywhere between two and 10 years in a given number of grade levels, depending on their social, cognitive, emotional and physical development, but we do not have that situation at the moment.

I think the development of the special education system in many boards has been a positive one. I guess perhaps it may be fear on the part of many families, many individuals, many organizations, that we cling to the idea of special education because we feel that if you eliminate it totally, then there will be an awful lot of children who will have nothing.

Mr Mahoney: Fall through the cracks.

I do not mean to be cute about it. You almost turn it around. Education is special and it does not matter what the status of the individual is as to any particular challenges they face in their lives, be they physical, mental or whatever.

I am somewhat concerned sometimes about the deliverers of the programs. We have talked about the identification and placement review committee program and process and how unfortunate that can be at times. I just think we could move more towards concentrating on the educational programs and not really worry about whether the money is put into one pot or specified. If we have groups that are continuing to represent themselves in certain areas, I think there are more important things to be concerned about and I hope the day comes when we eliminate the word "special."

1610

The Chairman: Thanks, Mr Mahoney. We will conclude with a final question from Mr Villeneuve and he has assured me it is only this big. Your answer can be slightly expanded from that.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The mandate of this committee is the funding of education and of course it follows that it is the funding of boards by the ministry and that is what this question will be surrounding.

On the timing of the general legislative grants, the GLGs, I get speaking with my school board

representatives back home and it seems to be going further and further on into the year. Last year, for instance, a considerable increase to the local taxpayer occurred because the GLGs did not go up as much as they had anticipated. When the GLGs are announced at the end of March or maybe in April for the year beginning in September, do you feel that possibly special education might be shortchanged because that might be one of the corners that would be cut whenever GLGs are not quite as high as anticipated? Could we possibly have your comments on what happens to special education when cutbacks have to occur? Are they front-line people and front-line items that are cut right away, or what happens?

Mrs Nichols: If I may flip back to my previous persona when I was a trustee for a number of years, I would say that although we were certainly very frustrated around the Metro school board table when the GLGs were so very late, I do not think we ever cut special education in particular. What we do see sometimes, though, is that when in fact the amount that the local taxpayer has to shell out on property taxes is higher than expected, then very often you will see, especially—not so much in the *Globe* and in the *Toronto Star*—in some of the smaller community newspapers, articles saying that the reason this is happening is because the government has done this, that or the other. But then, special education is often raised as the reason; the local school board, however accountable, however responsible, could not control it because of special education.

We find that our chapters of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario frequently send in articles like that and it creates a little bit of a tension in the community, but I have not heard it suggested that the boards actually cut special education expenditure.

Mr Beveridge: Mr Villeneuve, we have been through a number of budget review processes and meetings over the years and, yes, the GLGs do come late, but in my experience I cannot remember somebody cutting a special education program. Most of our elected officials, who are very accountable, really say: "Deliver direct

programs to people. If you have to cut things, cut things." They say, "Deliver programs, but cut things." I have not experienced any cutbacks in special education programs due to the lateness of the grants.

Mr Villeneuve: So this has not prompted your first recommendation?

Mrs Nichols: No.

Mr Beveridge: No.

Mrs Nichols: Although we would certainly like to see them earlier, no question about that, because it would help communities in general if they were announced earlier.

Mr Villeneuve: Might you suggest then, having sat as a trustee and now with the special advisory council, when the best time would be? I do not know what is the big holdup at times with the ministry, where it runs into snags, but certainly it would make the administration of the school boards much, much easier if the GLGs were announced, say, at the end of October or beginning of November.

Mrs Nichols: I would think that would be ideal. I do not know how feasible that would be, but certainly if one takes it away from a school board situation into our own households, for example, I certainly could not budget my household expenditures in such a way that I will decide three months from now what I spent last month. It does not work that way.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the council for its input to the committee today. When you consider we scheduled half an hour and we took one hour and 17 minutes, I think we did extremely well. We look forward to seeing you under your other hats tomorrow. I think we will probably hear from both Mrs Nichols and Mrs Walker tomorrow, if I am not mistaken.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They will contradict themselves tomorrow.

Mrs Nichols: Absolutely not.

The Chairman: Thank you. The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1615.

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No. E-5

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 14 September 1989



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 14 September 1989

The committee met at 1004 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning. I would like to begin this morning's session of the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, with particular regard to the equity, adequacy and accountability of financing. I am pleased to welcome this morning, as our first presentation, the Ontario Jewish Association for Equity in Education.

Mr Farber and Mr Segal, welcome to the committee. Perhaps you would begin by officially introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

ONTARIO JEWISH ASSOCIATION FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Mr Segal: Thank you. My name is Murray Segal. I am the chairman of the Ontario Jewish Association for Equity in Education. To my right is Bernie Farber, who is the professional director of that association, among other duties that he carries out on behalf of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Approximately one year ago, in June 1988, we sat before this same committee in good faith as invitees to present the views of Ontario's Jewish community regarding our assertion that government funding for independent Jewish day schools is a fair and equitable request. At that time we were listened to most politely, a number of you asked interesting questions and we were given the overall impression that, at the very least, our concerns had been heard and would be reported back to government.

Much to our regret, we were neither invited back to the second session nor, when the preliminary report of the select committee was released, did we read anything regarding the concerns we brought forward over a year ago.

This led us to two possible conclusions, both of which are unacceptable to our community: Either the select committee did not hear a word we had to say or, sadly, the justifiable concerns of our community were not seen as important in the scheme of things.

Rather than rewrite a presentation that we spent a good deal of time preparing last year, we feel that the best way to make our point is to re-read into the record the same presentation we gave last year, in the summer of 1988. Our concerns are still the same, our parents still struggle to send their children to Jewish day schools, but we have one added fear: Our elected representatives do not seem to be even listening.

We have come again in good faith. We will once again repeat our message. We hope, at the very least, you will listen in good faith.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario region, is the democratically representative organization of the province's 150,000-strong Jewish community. Acting as the voice of Ontario Jewry, CJC has made numerous representations to government and intervened in legal proceedings on such matters as antidiscrimination laws, racially restrictive covenants, religious education in the public schools, antihate laws, civil liberties and civil rights, education, religious rights, minority rights and domestic peace and security.

The Ontario Jewish Association for Equity in Education, OJAEE, of which I am the chairman, grew directly out of the strong need felt within congress to represent the interests of Jewish education. Acting as a standing committee of congress, OJAEE is a federation of the province's Jewish day schools, which are located in Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and London and have a total enrolment of approximately 8,700 children.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, in its own right and through OJAEE, which was formed in 1984, has for years been working towards rectifying what the Jewish community regards as a long-standing inequity in the funding by government of Jewish day schools in this province. In attempting to obtain funding for the Jewish day school system, representatives of congress have met with well over eight ministers of education and have presented briefs to legislative committees, party caucuses and the Shapiro Commission on Private Schools in Ontario.

In the last two years alone, congress representatives have met with countless members of the provincial parliament, officials of the Ministry of

Education, the present Minister of Education (Mr Conway) and a number of his cabinet colleagues. Our appearance before this select committee on education is but one more effort in what has been an ongoing process.

Though Ontario Jews have always been strong supporters of public education, and the majority of Jewish children are educated within the public school system, most Jews do believe in parental right of choice in selecting the educational system in which their children should be enrolled. Public education has at times been flawed by an insensitivity to the concerns of minority communities.

1010

Ontario's Education Act mandates religious instruction, which in some cases has taken the form of Christian indoctrination. Furthermore, though students have the right not to participate, the very process of exemption singles out some students from others and is in effect discriminatory.

Some Ontario public high schools insist on teaching works with problematic racial stereotypes, such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *Huckleberry Finn*, to children as young as 13 years of age, with teachers who have had no race relations training, despite years of protest by the Canadian Jewish Congress that such works be taught more age-appropriately. The result is that children of minority communities have been negatively affected and these literary classics have at times unintentionally promoted prejudice rather than served as vehicles for understanding.

For the most part, the Ontario public school system does meet the needs of a province actively promoting a multicultural society. Nevertheless, there are a significant number of Jewish parents who want their children to learn within a Jewish atmosphere which is at one and the same time free of any insensitivity and complementary to and supportive of their Canadian identity. It is these parents who opt to send their children to independent Jewish day schools. In the view of the Canadian Jewish Congress, these schools measurably add to the multicultural framework of our province and are deserving of governmental financial support.

Among the 500 independent schools in Ontario, there are 20 Jewish day schools, including elementary and secondary schools. Canadian Jewish Congress feels that a gross unfairness has been perpetuated against those parents who have opted out of the public school system and chosen for their children an independent school that fits with their religious and/or philosophical beliefs.

I am going to add one thing here which was not in last year's brief, and that is that it seems to us that the continued negation of funding or even consideration of funding for our schools makes a mockery, a sham, of public policy in Ontario as stated by the Ontario Human Rights Code, which says it is public policy in Ontario that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights—and rights—without regard to race, creed, colour, sex, marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin. The Jewish community is not equal in rights to public funding in comparison with, for example, the Roman Catholic community.

Having said that, I will revert to the brief we had last year.

Congress consistently has supported extension of funding to the Roman Catholic secondary schools beyond grade 10 as fully consonant with our society's concept of pluralism and multiculturalism. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality of extended funding to Roman Catholic high schools, though it noted that this action may be viewed as a form of discrimination, albeit permissible under our Constitution, the morality of which was not dealt with, of course, by the court; it dealt with the legality only.

This judgement has in no way removed the responsibility of provincial politicians from doing what is right. We believe it is morally offensive not to fund other legitimate religious groups with viable school systems in the province of Ontario.

Independent schools predate public schools. In reality, the entire development of education in our country grew out of the independent school system. Today, independent schools reflect a diversity of approaches in education that parents obviously want for their children. Ontario remains the only jurisdiction that refuses to recognize in some tangible financial way the benefits and necessity of independent education in a pluralistic society.

The opponents of government funding to independent schools have raised up a number of bogymen. One of the most common is the myth that funding independent schools would splinter and erode the public system. As supporters of the public system, the Canadian Jewish Congress has looked very closely at this concern. We have found it to be without merit.

The experience of five provinces—Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—that fund independent schools shows there has been no erosion of the public system, even though in Quebec, for example, the

government covers 80 per cent of the operating costs of independent schools.

As Peter Dyck, an executive director with Saskatchewan's Department of Education, told Ontario's public hearings into this issue, "Funding of independent schools in Saskatchewan has been successful since its institution in 1968 and has not eroded the public school system in any way."

Erosion of the public school system has not occurred in Saskatchewan, in other provinces or in the 65 countries around the world which fund independent schools. Surely if other provinces in some form or another can fund their independent schools without endangering their public system, Ontario can do likewise.

There are four provinces other than Ontario which do not directly fund independent schools, but these do offer various forms of subsidization such as access to free textbooks and bus transportation. Ontario, which in many ways is in the forefront of promoting a pluralistic and multicultural Canada, is the only province offering no assistance whatsoever to its independent schools.

It is argued that independent school aid would create government-sanctioned elitist institutions open only to students from well-off families, fragmenting society along class lines. But it is very important to understand that our day schools bring together Jewish youngsters from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds, economic strata and family settings, thereby reflecting in microcosm the diversity which is today's Ontario. Jewish day schools fairly can be viewed as no more and no less than a Jewish public school system.

I can give you one example. My own child is in a class in which there are children from families on welfare. If he were attending the public school system in the area in which I happen to live, I doubt very much that there would be families on welfare in his classroom. There is a wide cross-section in this school, as there is in the other Jewish day schools through the system.

Sending their children to Jewish day schools has become a financial hardship for many of our parents. For those families unable to bear the financial burden, our Jewish community offers significant subsidization. As the cost of providing additional social services mounts, Jewish community funding is being increasingly tapped. Much funding is now being channelled to our senior citizens in order to ensure that their remaining years are lived in comfort, security and dignity. Needless to say, the availability of

funds for continued subsidization of education may be severely limited.

In the last four years alone, costs for Jewish day schools have risen enormously. For example, in 1984 the average cost to send a child to the Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto was approximately \$3,000. This is last year's cost. Presently, the cost has risen to \$4,000 and this year it will be higher than that. In these and in other Jewish elementary schools across the province last year, it was as high as \$4,600. At the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, a full-day Jewish secondary school, the tuition last year was \$5,600.

Jewish day schools, despite large tuition fees, cannot offer the amenities and unique services found in most public schools. Jewish children who require specialized programs due to physical handicap or learning disabilities are handled to the best of our schools' abilities, but unfortunately do not have available to them the kinds of resources offered by the public system.

It is true that parents make a choice to have their children educated in this alternative style. The Canadian Jewish Congress argues that in all fairness, parents making this choice should not have to face such grave economic and social penalties. After all, since the inception of Jewish day schools in Toronto in 1943, our graduates have made valuable contributions to Ontario and Canada. Products of our schools make significant contributions in the professions, academia, finance, commerce, agriculture, the arts and indeed every facet of Canadian society. Although our graduates play such a positive role in society's evolution, government has contributed nothing to their elementary and secondary education.

This is now the 41st anniversary year of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The charter states, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their child." Canada is, of course, a signatory to this declaration. The congress believes that to grant parents the right of selecting the type of their children's education without providing the financial wherewithal from the general pool to which they contribute equally in effect amounts to giving them no meaningful choice at all.

We believe that if a child is entitled to the whole of an education at public expense, which would be the case if all Jewish day school youngsters were enrolled in publicly supported schools, then surely that same child should be

entitled to government funding for the full cost of his or her general studies training in a Jewish school.

1020

The cost to educate two children of an average-income Jewish family is between \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year. The cost of educating two children of a Catholic family in a separate school is not significantly different. Why is a Jewish parent any different from a Catholic parent with respect to rights in Ontario? Why must Jewish parents accept financial hardship and personal sacrifice in opting for a Jewish day school education for their children?

The Jewish day school system has proven itself viable. Fair play alone, one would think, dictates that financial support should be forthcoming to Jewish independent schools. To do otherwise, in the eyes of parents and the average Ontarian, perpetuates an injustice in the educational philosophy of this province.

Public opinion surveys taken over the past few years demonstrate that the public in Ontario has a much fairer view of the issue than do the politicians. For example, the Environics Research Group found that 67 per cent of respondents agreed that private schools should be funded if they meet provincial education standards. Other polls have supported this finding, especially in the light of extension of funding to the completion of high school in the Roman Catholic system. In April of last year, TVOntario's *Speaking Out*, during a telephone survey, recorded a two-to-one positive response for the funding of independent schools in our province.

Is public schooling the only effective educational philosophy for dealing with pluralism in Ontario? For those who do not believe in freedom of choice, for those who refuse to understand that there are and should be alternatives, for those who do not see the imperative of equality of treatment, indeed the public school system is the only tool. However, for those of us who cherish freedom of choice, who understand that one religious group must not be favoured over all others, independent education paid for by the government—paid for by the public, really—is a credible and legitimate alternative. Surely the time has come for Ontario to join other provinces and 65 countries by funding independent schools.

In October 1985 the government-commissioned report on private schools in Ontario, written by Dr Bernard Shapiro, who is now the deputy minister, was released. Four years later, we find ourselves still awaiting some

response to Dr Shapiro's recommendation for full funding of independent schools in our province.

The Jewish community has been more than patient with our government and politicians on this issue. If indeed all three political parties have a vision of Ontario as a true multicultural and pluralistic province, then let them show the necessary moral leadership and act now.

Using the Shapiro commission as a working guide, the Canadian Jewish Congress recommends that the following action be undertaken:

1. That a definitive timetable be established prior to the 1989-90 school year to implement the funding procedure for independent schools;

2. That the government establish an independent task force which would act in a consultative and advisory capacity to develop a funding formula that would include proper accountability. This task force should include members of the independent school community and/or their associations;

3. That Ontario meet its multicultural obligations by ensuring that the recommendations listed are dealt with in a manner consonant with the ethnic and religious diversity of the province of Ontario.

This select committee on education can act as the catalyst for fair and equitable treatment to all religious and cultural groups in our province. We urge you to do so post-haste.

Thank you again for politely listening to this presentation for the second time.

The Chairman: Just before we go to our questioners, I would like to clarify from the committee's vantage point that our mandate in the first set of hearings was to look at the structure of education in Ontario, specifically relating to OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion. While we welcomed any briefs relating to education, that was our primary mandate, and if you read through our report, then you will notice that our only recommendations related to those specific items.

We very much welcome your presentation today. It is directly on topic, since we are looking at the financing of education. I am sure you will find that there will be recommendations relating to private school funding in our report this time. I just wanted to clarify that; it was not that we were ignoring your presentation or your cause, but simply that we felt it more appropriate to comment on our specific mandate at that time.

We will start the questioning with Mr Ville-neuve.

Mr Villeneuve: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your presentation. It is a repetition of what you presented when you were here before and I think it drives home the point that you are very concerned.

There are times when governments act, to some degree, with reluctance. You have quite obviously studied provincial models in place, or for that matter possibly American models. Which one do you feel would fit your particular situation best as we address the funding of education, including private schools?

Mr Segal: There is a wide diversity of approaches taken in different jurisdictions and there are elements in different ones that are better than others. There is no single one that would necessarily be the single best one. What we believe would make a lot of sense would be per capita grants, for example, of a portion of the educational cost that relates to general studies, based on, say, the cost of educating children in the public school system, with proper accountability to make sure that the teachers are properly qualified and that the general studies curriculum meets the requirements of Ontario.

For example, Quebec has a system which is close to the one that we would consider to be pretty good. British Columbia does, as well, although it has a system where they provide funding at one level depending on the type of school and at a different level for other types of schools, depending on how closely they conform to what the province itself thinks is a desirable form of education.

I think there are a number of different models, the details of which I am not sure this committee is necessarily mandated to deal with. I think we are dealing mostly with the principle. We would like at this stage to have it recognized by the government that there is an inequity and the government would like to do something about it. I think we have dealt with the way of resolving that inequity, the details, in one of the recommendations, namely that a consultative task force should be established to develop a specific funding formula which would be most appropriate for the needs of Ontario.

Mr Farber: Mr Villeneuve, I could also add that the Shapiro report has put together a very complex and yet interesting method in which this could be accomplished. Whereas we may not agree with all the varied recommendations of the Shapiro report, in general I think it is a good working model that we can rely on to at least get things moving.

Of course, the problem is that the Shapiro report came out, interestingly, on Hallowe'en 1985, and I do not know if that was prophetic or not. By the way, I have about 10 copies of it in case any of you do not have copies of it. We are still awaiting some word from the government to say yes, say no, say maybe, but say something. It was a \$3-million commission and we still have not heard anything at all. So possibly this might be the time that a committee such as a select committee could at least make a recommendation that the Shapiro report be reported on, one way or another.

Mr Segal: I should also add, with respect to the chair's comment, that we do appreciate the clarification that you have given us. At the same time, I hope that the committee will understand the frustration behind the decision that we made, and it was not taken lightly, as to the form of presentation we would make today. We could have said the same thing in different words. We decided not to. While the committee is concerned legitimately with these other issues which you have mentioned in its first report, our community, and members of the community, are literally drowning in the flood of financial obligations they now have, not the least of which is the cost of educating their children.

Another year has passed by and even though we did make a presentation in good faith, and were listened to in good faith, I am sure, by the members of the committee over a year ago, we have had no indication whatsoever since then from this committee—although you have not dealt with it yet—or from the ministry that it intends in any way to respond positively. A year has gone by and the frustration continues. It mounts. There are people in our community who are getting very, very restless. They are pushing us, not that we would not be here in any event. The fundamental issue is not so much the detail but rather the fundamental concept, because the details have been worked out.

The only place literally in the free world where there is no direct funding of independent schools is in the United States, but they do not fund the Catholics. They do not fund anybody else, although they do provide indirect funding for school busing and for textbooks and for special services and things like that, but they have this complete separation of church and state. They do not have the history that we in Ontario do.

1030

The frustration is growing. Very simply put, we do not begrudge the Catholics what they have. I have an Italian neighbour. He has

contributed towards Canada, I think, no less and no more than I have. He is a good citizen. He obeys the law. He pays his taxes. So do I. We cannot see that something that happened in 1867 should perpetuate for people who are here now the situation where, by the fact that he is a Catholic, he has certain rights, and as a non-Catholic I do not have those rights. It is just as simple as that. It is grossly inequitable, as I have said before.

This is the fundamental point that I would like to add today—which was not in our brief but I cannot state it strongly enough—that the public policy of Ontario that people are equal in rights regardless of race or creed is a sham. It is a mockery as long as one religious group has the right.

We could understand—we do not believe that it would be right—to have one public school system funded by the province and if anybody else wants out let them pay. We do not think that is right. We think that people have the right to educate their children within the religious and moral framework which is most suitable to them. That would be at least understandable—not necessarily acceptable, but it would be understandable. What is not understandable to us and to many others in the independent school system is why, if I happen to subscribe to Roman Catholicism, I have certain rights and these rights go beyond what is in the high school. In the elementary school, there is no such thing as open enrolment in the Catholic school system, for example. It is very restricted. They will take some non-Catholics, but they are not obligated to. They have certain rights. They must meet certain standards. They are subject to scrutiny by the Ministry of Education.

We are quite happy to accept the same level of scrutiny, the same type of regulation as they are. We cannot continue to accept that, because we are Jewish, we do not have the right to access our moneys to which we have contributed. It is not the government's money; it is our money. I pay my taxes, the same as everybody else, the same as my Italian neighbour. He has the right; I do not have the right. I do not understand why and I cannot accept that a deal was made in 1867 to exclude Jews. That deal never was made. The deal then was that Catholics should be funded.

Our sister province with whom that deal was made to ensure confederation, Quebec, has long ago seen fit to rectify this glaring inequity and has done so and it is now providing something like 80 per cent of the cost of educating children in our schools and in other schools that meet the

acceptable criteria. Quebec has done it. Saskatchewan has done it. Manitoba has done it. British Columbia has done it. Most other countries in the free world have done it. The United States has not, but they do not do the Catholics either. But the United States, where they do not do the Catholics, do provide substantial amounts depending on the jurisdiction. For example, in New York state there are substantial amounts of indirect funds which are going from the pockets of the people who make contributions towards this, namely, the taxpayers, back into their school systems through such things as psychological services and school buses and textbooks and milk programs and things like that. Ontario is moving backwards.

We have had a problem also with the heritage language which we did not deal with today, but there has been a step backwards in that area as well because conditions have now been imposed which make it virtually impossible to have access to heritage language through the public school system in our schools because of conditions which have been put on it which do not appear in the heritage language programs in the public school system. We see this as a step backwards and it is simply a continuing frustration on our behalf.

So, while we understand your clarification and appreciate it, I hope you understand our clarification as to why we are repeating the same thing again, and maybe this will get some attention somewhere a little bit quicker than saying maybe next year and maybe there are a few other things, that there are other important things—for us this is important.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Segal. We have three more questioners on the list—Mr Kanter, Mrs O'Neill and Mr Smith—and we are technically out of time. So, would you try to keep the preambles as brief as possible to allow us to get through the questions.

Mr Kanter: Madam Chairman, as you know, I am not a regular member of this committee. I was not here a year ago when this was presented. I find the information quite comprehensive and persuasive.

I do have a question relating to the term "general studies," which I find on page 9 of your brief and which you referred to in an answer to Mr Villeneuve. Do I take it that you are generally, in terms of a matter of principle, seeking funding primarily, or perhaps exclusively, for only those subjects that are now taught in the public school and not seeking public funding for specifically Jewish or religious

subjects? Is that the meaning of "general studies" as found in your brief?

Mr Segal: Yes, precisely.

Mr Kanter: Again, just to complete the point, in a sense this would be somewhat more limited, I suppose, than the funding the province is now providing for separate school supporters, where funding is provided for all aspects of that program, including the specifically religious aspect. You are asking for something different, shall we say, and limited to only those subjects that are also taught in the public school system. You have mentioned accountability, presumably, to the same or a similar standard as those taught in a public school.

Mr Segal: Yes.

Mr Kanter: I just wanted to clarify that.

Mr Segal: That is correct.

Mr Farber: I am glad you brought up the point. We have recognized that it is really the responsibility of the Jewish community to teach Jewish studies and Jewish religious programming. We do not expect the province to pay for that. What we do expect the province to cover is the subjects that these same children would get or take in a public school system. So we are really requesting 50 per cent funding, not 100 per cent funding. You are absolutely right.

Mr Kanter: That is a useful clarification. Thank you. Madam Chairman, in keeping with your request that I be brief—now someone else is chairing, okay.

Ms Poole: It is still Madam Chairman.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs O'Neill): Because I have been asked to chair, I will now ask Mr Smith to ask a question. Perhaps I will be given an opportunity to ask later.

Mr D. W. Smith: I am a substitute on this committee, as well. Because of the question Ron asked, maybe he is going to change my question a little bit. What I was going to ask you was, if your schools were funded the same way that any other school is funded, would you foresee more Jewish schools developing? If the province funded your independent schools, I presume other groups would want funding, as well. In fact, I would like to think that the government would likely fund independent schools generally. Do you see this taking a great number away from the public schools, or even the Catholic schools?

Mr Segal: No, we do not. We have theoretical and practical reasons for answering your question in the negative. The experience in other

jurisdictions has been that there have been insignificant changes in enrolments in the various school systems. People in the Jewish community who now opt for the Jewish school system do so at a financial sacrifice, which we believe is inequitable. From the surveys we have done, there are many reasons why some of the parents in the Jewish community send their children to the public school systems and some to the Jewish day school systems. There may be some shifting. From the surveys we have done, we believe the shifting would be negligible.

This has been borne out by the experience in all the other jurisdictions in Canada, certainly, where this has happened. The executive director in the Ministry of Education of Saskatchewan was here. He was asked the same question, whether it led to a change. His answer was really no. People send their children to these school systems for a variety of reasons, and they do so at a financial sacrifice, at least those who were asked to make payment. Those who are at the bottom end of the economic scale are asked to make no payment, in any event. We do not think there would be, and there has not been in other jurisdictions, a substantial shift. There has been relatively very little shift between the school systems.

Mr Farber: Let me just underscore that. Perhaps Quebec can be used as the best example. Many politicians have said to us, "Saskatchewan and Ontario are significantly different in population, in structure, in climate, etc.," so perhaps we can take a look at Quebec. There are 150,000 Jews in Ontario, approximately, and maybe 90,000 in Quebec, so it is as close as we are going to get.

There has been almost 80 per cent funding of Jewish day schools in Quebec for many, many years now, and yet in the last 20 years there has been no significant shift from what is known as the Protestant school system into the Jewish day school system. The majority of Jewish children still go to the Protestant school system. I will tell you quite honestly that we very much would like to see Jewish children in Jewish day schools, but the fact of the matter is that Jewish parents make choices as anybody else makes choices.

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I would also suggest, and I think Mr McBurney might be able to elaborate on this later on, that within the general independent school community, you will find that in other provinces there has not been a general shift away from public schools. There is also some evidence to lead us to believe that the funding of independent

schools actually has strengthened the public school system as a result of having to compete a little bit more, and that as a result of many of these types of things, the public school system actually has seemed to be bettered in some of these provinces.

These are things that I think have to be considered on an overall basis. We do not anticipate any major shifts in the next 25 years away from public education.

The Acting Chairman: Are there any further questions from any other members of the committee?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would like to hear from the chair myself.

The Acting Chairman: I want to thank you both for coming and again stating your position so sincerely and, I consider, completely. I would like to ask you two things. Have you a preference between direct and indirect funding? You have suggested in your second recommendation that you are interested in a task force. I wonder if you have made that decision regarding direct and indirect funding.

Mr Segal: We deliberately have not responded officially to the specific recommendations of the Shapiro commission because we felt there would be no point in doing so unless there were some indication that the government intended to do something in the area.

Direct and indirect funding are concepts that are difficult to deal with in the abstract. With a bit of goodwill on the part of the government and on the part of the school system, which we certainly would be prepared to offer, I think a system could be worked out. In just the simplest terms, I think direct funding probably would be most acceptable, in that the funding is coming and we know how it is coming. As for indirect funding, there is perhaps another branch of government that has to be introduced, namely, the public school system in the local area.

In some areas, it might be easy to work with them. For example, it is no secret that in the city of North York, Jewish day school parents represent a significant portion of voters and may have the sort of political strength to be able to reach an effective working agreement. For example, our relations with the North York Board of Education on many issues have been very friendly and we have been able to work them out rather well.

This may not apply necessarily in some areas where we do not have the same numbers of people and therefore perhaps a direct grant would be best, but again, we have not shut the door and

certainly are willing to consider and discuss any form that would meet the best requirements. Again, I think that is a detail that could be worked out through this consultative committee we were suggesting.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you both very much for your compassion for the people you represent and for the clear way in which you did the presentation. I hope you realize that we have heard you in good faith. I think our chairman explained the reasoning for our direction of reporting and I hope you will find something useful in the third report of the select committee on education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: Just before we call up Lyle McBurney, I want to let the committee know that I learned just a few minutes ago that a series of meetings or a major meeting was held yesterday between Ministry of Education officials and the boards of education and federations of teachers, regarding pooling and a number of changes in legislation that I learn are expected to be passed in our House by 15 November, with some major changes about how money between panels will be dealt with and a number of other matters.

As a member of this committee that is dealing with finances at this point, which was briefed only Monday and Tuesday by the Ministry of Education, I am more than a little irked that to find out about this development and this kind of timetable and potential change to funding—the specifics of pooling, if you will—I have to hear about it indirectly in the hallway this morning rather than being told about it by officials of the Ministry of Education in our briefings in the last couple of days.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you for bringing that point to our attention, Mr Johnston.

Mr Jackson: Along with my colleague the member for Scarborough West, I think this is becoming like a broken record, that we keep coming to this kind of situation. I think it is now the fourth incident in the last two years. I can only put my regret on the record.

On a personal note, I can say that I spoke before the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation and speculated on all the matters that have been drawn to my attention, but that is not the point. To have speculated that these significant amendments in educational financing were coming is one thing, but we now find out that groups are being briefed after their submissions are completed and they are ready to present themselves before this committee. Now they have to go back, in a sense, and possibly rewrite

all their briefs. At best, this committee should suspend its hearings until it has received a full briefing so that we, as legislative representatives with a mandate to deal with educational finance matters, are at least as up to par in terms of our information as are the groups that are presenting themselves before us.

I think it is an inappropriate position for us to be in when people coming before us know more about the Liberal government of Ontario's plans than do members of the Liberal caucus or members of any caucus of this House. It is in that context that I wish to add a further concern, but would embrace all the concerns Mr Johnston and I have now raised. I will leave that for the record and for the chairman to deal with since I understand the chairman's role is to follow the mandate in a nonpartisan fashion. I believe this is a serious matter that the committee should address.

The Chairman: I have had a brief conversation with Mr Johnston about the tenor of his remarks. If it is the committee's will, I shall convey these concerns to the ministry. Would that be acceptable?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Absolutely.

The Chairman: I will undertake to do that today, then, as soon as our hearings have adjourned.

Mr Jackson: Madam Minister—

The Chairman: Thank you for the promotion. Do you know something I do not?

Mr Jackson: Since the politicians are making decisions, it would be appropriate if we got a decision from a politician. In fairness to the bureaucrats who were in front of us the preceding two days, they did indicate that they were only able to share with this committee that which the politicians were allowing them to share with us. So this is essentially a political question. We have to talk to the minister and his staff and not necessarily the staff of the ministry.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The great irony, Mr Jackson, is that the same people who have been briefing us, who were here in support for us, were at that meeting. Mr Trbovich was involved in that meeting. I agree with you that it is not his responsibility to make the determination as to what is divulged to us. That is a political decision. But it is just a bit much to find out that there is now a 15 November deadline.

For me to learn about that, about a bill being passed in this House, to learn that moneys between panels which were usually considered separate in the past are now going to be

considered the same as going in a lump to the boards, and to learn that there are going to be changes in the boundaries of the Catholic boards around the province, to learn all of this in the hallway two days after I have been supposedly briefed on the latest that is happening in educational finance is just unacceptable. I am trying to be a little calm here today but—

Mr Jackson: Normally we fly off the handle in these matters, and justifiably, but I think this is not just a letdown to two opposition critics and their caucuses.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is an insult to all of us.
1050

Mr Jackson: I think it is an insult to the entire committee, which is my point, because it puts the entire committee and our research staff at a disadvantage to groups that will present themselves in the next two weeks with information they have and we do not have. Now it is not necessarily appropriate to suspend today's hearings, but I cannot see the value in proceeding with an agenda that we have based on the briefings we received, when the groups that will present themselves may disregard, lay aside or modify their presentations to deal with matters we have not been briefed on.

That hampers the committee in its efforts to follow its mandate. I am not going to say that this was designed and was done on purpose. That is not the issue. How are we to do an effective job in terms of reacting to public concerns when we have not even received that kind of briefing?

You have just in the last 10 minutes assured private school concerns in this province that we will deal with that issue. But if our agenda takes a radical turn and it is out of our hands, then I think it is a matter that should be raised before the committee and we should make a decision as to whether or not we can proceed effectively. That is the area of my greatest concern at this point. What has been done has been done. But I, for one, do not intend to run all over this province for public hearings and have groups present themselves that have more information than we should have. I think that is a fair concern.

The Chairman: Mr Jackson, in view of the concerns expressed, I will undertake to do two things. The first is that I shall speak to the minister as opposed to the minister's representatives.

Mr Jackson: I appreciate that very much.

The Chairman: The second is that as far as the travel arrangements go, I think, to be fair to our presenters, many of whom may not even be

addressing the pooling issue, we should continue with the hearings as scheduled. But what I will attempt to get from the ministry is a set of briefing notes for each member so that we can be very quickly brought up to scratch with the proposals of the ministry.

I think certainly Mr Brumer can obtain that material for us. I do not know whether it is readily available. I would assume it is in written form at this stage. If it is, even if we could have it by the time we adjourn at 12 o'clock today or probably 12:30, then at least we would have an opportunity to study it before we went into our travel arrangements next week.

If that is satisfactory, that is where I will leave it for now, that (a) I will talk to the minister, and (b) we will obtain briefing material for committee members.

Mr D. W. Smith: I would hope you would convey the sentiments of the committee to the minister when you are doing that.

The Chairman: Yes, I will very much do so. It is difficult enough to operate in a committee, but when we are operating without full information it even more so.

Mr Jackson: I just want to indicate that I was not suggesting we suspend all operations, but proceed directly to get that information in the time we have. I would say that I am surprised at this under the current minister because during his previous tenure this did not happen. He did make efforts to brief Richard Johnston and me, who have been the Education critics for almost the past five years; quite frankly, the previous minister picked and chose when he chose to brief the other caucuses.

I am very surprised that during Mr Conway's first opportunity to do so, he did not. I would even hope that this committee at some point may consider the implications of putting out information to the public and to the shareholders in education without briefing members of the Legislature. We as a committee may wish to deal with that question and make a recommendation at some future point. I will leave it at that.

The Chairman: Mr Brumer, I hate to put you on the spot, but I wonder if you could just comment on whether you are aware whether these briefing documents are currently available and whether we could expect to receive them before our hearings adjourn today.

Mr Brumer: I do not know to what extent the briefing materials are available. I would imagine they are available or the briefings would not have taken place. My understanding is that the

briefing that took place yesterday was to provide some of the details of issues that have been considered before and discussed before, at least in principle, and announcements that have been made, like the question of pooling. That announcement was made a long time ago but the precise details of that are what is coming out now that we have a draft in terms of the pending legislation.

I will certainly get back to my office on this matter and arrange to have the briefing materials before you. The other possibility, if you wish, is to see whether or not the persons involved in those areas and much more knowledgeable in those areas than I am could come before the committee and explain these things. I do not know what your agenda is like for this afternoon.

The Chairman: Thank you for that offer. Would committee members be able to adjust their schedules?

Interjection: No.

The Chairman: It sounds probably as though the latter offer, while much appreciated, would not be able to be carried out.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sorry. I had to exit for a few moments. I am wondering if all of the committee members have been quite specific in what they would want from the minister. It does seem to be a serious concern. I do not want people to get something they feel is totally incomplete, so I am asking if there are people on any side of this table who want details. I am sorry; I am not aware of anything that went on yesterday so I cannot even request, but those of you who seem to have had discussions beyond this table, would you be specific? I think it would help the chairman with her request.

Mr Jackson: I will tell you what I have.

Mrs O'Neill: Just what you feel you need so that you have complete information would be very helpful to Ms Poole when she speaks with Mr Conway.

The Chairman: May I ask a question? Would it be acceptable to get the briefing packages that were prepared for the boards at yesterday's meeting?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That would be a good start. If the committee then has extra questions coming out of that, we can call the ministry people back for that.

Mrs O'Neill: I presume that somebody here has—

Mr Jackson: Which ministry people are travelling with us?

The Chairman: I know Mr Brumer is, and also Dr Perry.

Mr Jackson: Perhaps it would be appropriate if in the process of their briefing, we might have opportunities in our agenda to meet in camera to go over some of those matters while we are in transit; possibly. I leave that as a suggestion.

Mrs O'Neill: So you have full knowledge there was a package distributed yesterday and that is what you want. Is that the clear message?

Mr R. F. Johnston: The matters that were looked at and discussed with us yesterday.

Mrs O'Neill: Yesterday's date was, what, 13 September?

Mr Jackson: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: We will request that.

The Chairman: It seems to me that for our Sudbury schedule we are leaving Ottawa at nine o'clock in the morning and our hearings do not begin there until 1 pm. It may well be that we might be able to arrange an in camera meeting with members of the committee and Dr Perry and Mr Brumer.

Mr Jackson: I will not be in Sudbury. I will be attending a 25th anniversary for a Christian heritage school, a private independent school, to raise some of the concerns that have been presented here at the table.

Mrs O'Neill: Your timing is perfect, Mr Jackson.

The Chairman: Was that a paid political announcement?

Mr Jackson: I quite frankly consider my presence there more important.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Why do we not get the material and see what we want to do with it when we have the material?

The Chairman: We can be flexible as to what we do from there.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you.

The Chairman: I think maybe at this stage we can go back to our schedule. We are now 30 minutes behind. We apologize to our presenters today, but as you can tell, this was an unexpected matter in that it had to be dealt with immediately.

Next is the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools. Welcome back to our committee, Mr McBurney. If you would introduce your colleague and yourself for the purposes of Hansard, you may begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr McBurney: I have with me today John Vriend, who is vice-president of our association, representing the board of directors.

Like our friends from the Jewish community, the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools takes the unusual step of resubmitting its first brief of July 1988 to the select committee, since the association believes that the committee has not adequately addressed the goals and philosophy of education for Ontario. My directors believe it is futile to continue to make submissions on the financial and technical aspects of education while the fundamental issue of how parents can exercise the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their child is avoided by the committee.

In previous briefs and correspondence, the association was unsuccessful in determining why the committee dropped a reference to the important role of the parents in their children's education from its original mandate as given by the former minister, Chris Ward.

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The issue of who has the prior right to choose, parent or state, did not appear in the committee's first report of December 1988. We believe that the failure to be clear about such a fundamental right of parents casts a cloud over that right and is a profound disservice to all Ontario parents, whether or not they would want to exercise their choice for an independent school.

In our previous appearances, we provided the committee with a statement of educational philosophy which calls for the equitable treatment of all parental choices, in schools that meet acceptable social and educational standards, for a satisfactory instruction standard, and for working principles to regulate a system of education by choice.

As I end the reading of our brief of July 1988, I leave you with this question: Why is it that independent schools provide policy options and are prepared to address issues of accountability and choice in education, while the select committee, which in our understanding was specifically formed to answer such questions, has, as we see it, failed to do so?

The Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools represents some 95 schools and 11,000 students. Since incorporation in 1974, the association has worked diligently for governmental acceptance of the ethic of educa-

tion by choice, including the legal recognition and public financial support of independent schools. We look upon the establishment of the select committee on education as another and, we hope, decisive step towards removing the discrimination which is still practised against the parents, students and other supporters of independent schools by the government of Ontario.

There was a time when government inaction to end the discrimination towards independent school supporters was excusable, through ignorance concerning the nature of those schools or perhaps because of the clouded constitutional issue about Roman Catholic school rights and the implications of full funding of the Roman Catholic system. This, however, is no longer the case.

During the last provincial election, the Canadian Jewish Congress condemned as morally offensive that one religious system be funded without offering a measure of equity to the other religious independent schools. We agree with this. A government of Ontario can no longer hide behind a 150-year-old constitutional idiosyncrasy which comes from the pioneer days of our country, particularly since that tradition of discrimination against Roman Catholics has been swept away by the Supreme Court. Failure to respond to the much greater level of discrimination practised against independent school supporters is not only morally offensive, it is morally perverse.

We do not bring witnesses with us today, because when we brought them before, at considerable expense to themselves, they wanted to tell their story here, but they went away affronted in so far as nothing was reflected of their visit here.

It was interesting to me today to see the activity around the press room about the Till girl and her disability. There was no such activity for Jeremy Anjema, a blind boy who appeared before this committee. The only distinction I could see, apart from the fact that one is a girl and the other a boy, is that Jeremy Anjema attended a private school and is not worthy of that kind of attention.

The decision to have a select committee examine in the first stage of hearings the philosophy and goals of education is momentous. It is a precedent for Ontario that the Legislature asks in a public and fundamental way about the nature and purposes of education and, by inference, what the government's role should be in it. The decision is momentous, for it brings to light that despite the expenditure of taxpayers'

money at a rate now exceeding \$10 billion annually, the government of Ontario has no articulated philosophy for education, no comprehensive policy for education or even a defined satisfactory instructional requirement for the schools of Ontario.

It is not necessary to recount at length recent history which compels these truths to be out. Full public funding for Roman Catholic schools, the creation of a francophone school system and the 1985 recommendations of the Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario fully illustrate how change in the social composition and social expectations of the people of Ontario has rendered obsolete many assumptions about schools and school-government relations which hearken to an earlier time and a very much different social environment.

Gone is the myth of a single, publicly funded, nonsectarian school system as the norm for Ontario. A diversity of systems is clear, both in law and practice. Debate in the Legislature now refers routinely to three public systems: Roman Catholic, nonsectarian public and francophone. Four can be counted if the Roman Catholic and nonsectarian division of the francophone system is taken into account; or perhaps five, because native peoples may be employed in native peoples' languages used in schools on the indigenous peoples' reserves; or six, if you would include independent schools, which, through property tax exemptions and the receipt of certain Ministry of Education services, already enjoy a modest amount of public funding.

Many philosophies of education find expression in Ontario, which is as it should be. It would be profoundly antidemocratic if the select committee were to recommend that any one of them be pre-eminently supported by the government. A government, in fact, cannot have a philosophy of education, though it tries to do so sometimes; it can only have a philosophy for education. The philosophic question for a government is: How does it administer fairly its responsibility to the various educational communities which are a natural part of a socially diverse democratic society?

It bodes well for the work of the select committee that it succeeded in translating a somewhat convoluted mandate into a simple statement which identifies equity or fairness as the central criteria for its deliberations. From Hansard, it appears Richard Johnston introduced the idea of social equality as critical to the philosophy and goals of education. Cam Jackson raised the issue of equal access for students to

programs. Mr Johnston, Mr Jackson and others reminded the committee that the findings of the Shapiro commission, which recommend the legal recognition and public financial support of independent schools, are integral to any discussion about the philosophy and goals of education for Ontario.

Yvonne O'Neill deserves credit for an initial summarizing statement which, with slight modification, became—and this is our understanding of Hansard, although we have been told by the chairman of the committee that it is not. We read it, "The committee will conduct a review of education philosophy in Ontario and the fundamental goals as they are directly related to the equal life chances and full development of each student and the very important role of parents or guardians in that development."

In the House, the statement by the minister was: "In the first phase the committee shall consider the role the school plays in a multicultural and multiracial society in the choices and objectives of students in transition to adulthood, including how the elementary and secondary school systems can assist students in shaping and fulfilling career and work objectives, factors in an information society which influence the young adults' choices of educational and training options and society's perception of those choices and the role of parents or guardians in the school systems and the transition of young students from secondary schools to the world of work or higher education."

I think the committee did, indeed, do a good good of reducing that to something understandable.

The invitation to appear before the committee inexplicably omits the words "and the very important role of parents or guardians in that development." We assumed this was a typographical omission only and not a deliberate choice of the committee. If that is not so, we are asking the committee to clarify the omission, since parental choice and involvement in their children's education is the bedrock upon which the structure of education is and should be based.

Conversation with legislators from all parties consistently evokes the comment that only schools which operate in the public interest deserve the protection and financial support of government, which is another way of saying that justice in education should be available to all schools that meet the test of public accountability. It is quite valid to ask, as many of them do, what conditions and principles should be applied

to properly determine that a school functions in the public interest.

OAAIS is here to share, from both study and experience in Ontario and elsewhere, including the five provinces which provide public support for independent schools, certain principles and conditions that can enable government to properly recognize schools which serve the public interest. Some of what we offer derives from the work of OAAIS's Ontario education policy options task force, which was established in September 1987 in anticipation of public discussions of the kind represented by the phase one hearings of the select committee. Guidelines for Public Justice, the completed task force report, is now in the possession of all three parties of the Legislature.

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The task force's January 1988 draft interim report was given to the parties of the Legislature. From it, you know the task force has reviewed legislation in every province, plus the recommendations of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario. The task force study covers the following topics: curriculum goals, government relations, teacher certification and employment practices, evaluation, facilities, student admission policy, finances and government funding and the legal right to exist.

An early statistical feature of the interim report disclosed that no province's education act or regulation suggested these topics as a matter of equity as exhaustively as the report of the commission on private schools. This is as important for the select committee as it is for independent schools. While OAAIS does not subscribe to all of the report's recommendations—indeed, much of the work of the task force is in critique of some of the recommendations and the philosophic assumptions behind them—the report is nevertheless acclaimed in Canada and abroad as the most authoritative publication available concerning education policy formation within a socially diverse society.

The depth and range of that report is rooted in the framework of principles, eight in all, which undergird the analysis and conclusions of the commission. Similarly, groups appearing before this committee and the committee itself have a clear responsibility to clarify what principles they will invoke when making recommendations which purport to include the quality of education or the opportunity to benefit from it. Only thus can what we would call spurious principles, such as the one that says the health of the publicly funded system depends on the continuing im-

poverishment of independent schools, be given the treatment they deserve: what we call trash-can treatment.

The committee knows that the heart of the Shapiro commission report is that social reality—the diverse beliefs, needs and expectations of all Ontarians—must be recognized in education policy. Principles VI and VII of the report put it thus: “There should be no legal public monopoly in education and private schools that meet the minimum standards specified by the government in terms of its obligation to both society and individual children should have a clear status in recognition of both the rights of citizens to make alternative choices and of the general value of diversity,” and, “Diversity within the public school system should also be encouraged.”

I pointed out at that time that perhaps it would be of more than passing interest that Bob Routledge, who was part of the delegation then, and Elaine Hopkins, a former director of my board, were both members of the advisory council to the commission on private schools.

The most disturbing conclusion which arises from a careful reading of the Shapiro commission report and one which the media, with their usual alertness, seemed to have overlooked, is that there is no defined minimum standard of instruction for publicly funded schools in Ontario. It is only compulsory that a child attend school. No legal provision promises that a child will be offered satisfactory instruction, except where the Education Act refers to children being educated in a private school or at home. Even there the term is not defined, which leaves the door open to the subjective judgement of the minister or his officials, with all the potential for conflict that that entails.

The commission recommended therefore that all schools, public, separate or independent, should as a condition of their very existence meet standards consisting of satisfactory instruction and having qualified teachers. At a minimum, the select committee must respond to the fact that there is no overall satisfactory instruction requirement for publicly funded schools and deal with the elements that should be part of such a requirement.

The OAAIS submission presents three elements of a public policy for education which would respect the diversity of types of schools found in Ontario and would contribute to a more effective deployment of provincial resources in education, and they are: an education policy statement by which government would commit itself to support responsible diversity in educa-

tion; a draft “satisfactory instruction” definition to be subscribed to by all schools in Ontario; and a list of principles describing the respective rights and responsibilities of schools and government.

They were to be found in appendix A of the brief. It was our hope then and it is today that it would lead the committee to incorporate some of those statements in its report.

We are aware that none of the parties of the Legislature have yet published a full response to the recommendation of the Shapiro report. It seems likely, even with the best of goodwill, that the incomplete state of education policy development in each party will prevent the select committee from responding comprehensively to the provisional models suggested by the commission report in support of alternative forms of schooling. The committee can, however—indeed it must—respond to the central proposition of the report, that as part of a creative public policy there be, “New initiatives both in the public support of private schools and in the relationship of these schools to the public schools.”

Our principal recommendation in these circumstances is that upon completion of the scheduled September stage 2 hearings and the submission of its report, the select committee be immediately reconstituted as the all-party select committee on alternative education to: (a) examine and report on the extent to which any of the recommendations of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario have been implemented or can be implemented under the present legislation, and (b) develop within one year, in co-operation with all groups supporting alternative philosophies and methodologies of education, an organizational model for the legal recognition and appropriate levels of funding for alternative schools which meet a standard of education approved by the Ministry of Education for all schools in Ontario.

Thank you for allowing us to resubmit our brief from July 1988.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think you are astute, as you indicate that the development of policy in the various parties at the moment may preclude very definitive responses either to Shapiro or the suggestions you and the previous group have made today. It certainly is the case for our party, as you know, which is going through a major internal review which probably will not be completed until next October, by the looks of it at this stage; in which we encourage your involvement as we move into the public hearing process of that.

My major concerns are always in the area of the public accountability concepts, around governance. I was reading the appendix which is drawn from your report that you distributed to us earlier on. I want you to talk a little about the notion you have put in (e), of the annual report being the fundamental accountability back to the supporter or elector, however you want to look at that, in terms of what is now the alternative or private school board. That does not really satisfy my needs in terms of the notion of accountability; it does not equate with the kind of accountability structures we have, say, for a public board of education, or even separate school trustees and what they have to go through. I wonder if you could talk a bit about your notions of that kind of accountability back through to the ratepayer, elector or however you want to look at it, in terms of the supporters of a private system.

Mr McBurney: Is it the accountability to the supporters or the accountability to the public authority?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I like some of things you have already gone through, in terms of back through the Ministry of Education side of things; that makes some sense, and that is one level of accountability. But in what I have been been focusing on in the problems I see with our present public system, it is more that it is very difficult at the moment for a public elector or ratepayer to know whom he or she should be going after around the quality of education questions because of the nature of our tiered system.

Mr McBurney: That is much less of a problem in a typical private school, because the chain of administrative command is very short. The parents generally know the trustees or directors of the school and the staff well. The communities are typically small. In some cases virtually everyone knows everyone including the student body. The fact that they pay gives them a heightened interest sometimes in what goes on in the school. In the schools we are associated with, parents have open access to those teachers and classrooms at any time.

If the public school labours under one structural handicap, it is the fact that it is a very large system, highly centralized, so that many parents hardly know where to pick it up. A lot of decisions are made in what appears to them to be a very rarified atmosphere. To some extent, when we have attacked this question, we try to do it in a public policy way to say that, indeed, if we have anything to contribute—I suppose if I were a public administrator, I would be asking, “What can I do to bring the kind of immediacy of

accountability into play which I perceive happening in a typical private school?”

What makes that work is that typically the schools are organized around some community idea or notion of education. They are not handicapped, to some extent, as is a comprehensive school that tries to be everything to everybody in the community. It says, “We do these things well and we serve this particular audience.” The lodestone of the common goal of the school is what really provides you with real accountability. In terms of a report, I suppose those are things that would need to be discussed so that there would be some kind of consistency in financial accountability and that other kind of thing.

The other kind of accountability, which I think people are often concerned about—I do not know; that may also be your concern—is the question of the narrow view that some people think an independent school might take in terms of what it teaches, or does it teach tolerance. Is it tolerant? That kind of accountability is perhaps even more important. For that reason, we worked very hard on the satisfactory instruction ideas of Dr Shapiro to bring what I call a test of tolerance into those instructional standards so that schools would indeed demonstrate that their windows are open on the world and that they do not teach anything inimical to the public good.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the initiative you have taken around satisfactory instruction—I have been trying to get the definition of that—is very useful to us as a committee.

I guess what I am looking at is that it certainly is easier now if you have a very small board and a small school, as an example, to have that direct contact, etc, but what we are talking about now is that instead of having that individual's dollar going in as a \$5,000-a-year fee that they know is going out, it comes from part of their tax dollar as it does for everybody else. That is the concept we are moving to, and with that it seems to me there is a demand for different kinds of accountability.

I guess what I do not see as yet in the thinking developed by your organization are notions of what the implications are in terms of election of boards, for instance, rather than the possibility at the moment where you can have appointed boards that make an annual report and through a very strong hierarchical approach to things can control the directions one way or another. For instance, the Catholic system can be said to have the same sense of community and focus that some of your religious schools within the

association might have, but on the other hand, it still has a model now which is an elected model in terms of its accountability to its ratepayers and soon to its corporate ratepayers, which it has not had in the past, which is another whole issue area here.

I guess that is what I see at the moment as not fully developed in terms of the presentation you have made. An annual report really does not meet those kinds of new tests when it is a tax rather than individual volunteer contribution. I wondered if that is what you wanted to focus on a bit.

Mr McBurney: I would say two things to that. One is that we have not presented these guidelines as the final model but simply as our perception of the world and that is very much open to the creative and constructive dialogue that must take place if independent schools are to gain the kind of recognition we are talking about. You may well teach us something about that.

But there is, I think, another way of—I have lost my train of thought. We are on to—

Dr Vriend: Perhaps I could just follow up on that. We understand that there are different avenues of accountability. As a former principal of an independent school, I understand the accountability to community and parents very well. As a principal I know you are very accountable to a parental board that is elected by the parents of your students. That level of accountability is an important part of our operation and Shapiro's report also commented on that, at least in his associated school model, in terms of saying that an associated school was one that was operated by an elected parental board.

There is another area of accountability to the general political framework. Sometimes I smile a little in terms of that question of accountability, because when I was the principal of an inspected private school, we were inspected by Ministry of Education inspectors every year. The local public school and the local separate school were never inspected by officials from the Ministry of Education here in Toronto and in fact the public scrutiny that we co-operated with was more extensive in that independent school than it was at the local public school or separate school, at least from the central provincial government.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Surely we could get in a long debate about that. That is true in terms of the function of a provincial civil servant coming to do an inspection, but it is not true of the accountability structures built into boards of education and supervisory officers and that kind of thing, which provides much of the inspection

kinds of things you are talking about. But I understand the arguments you are making on it.

Dr Vriend: But we are open to discussion and our comments in terms of regular consultation with a committee or with a council is open to discussion on those kinds of arrangements, because as Lyle has said, independent schools are not groups of people that do anything in a corner or want to do anything away from public scrutiny. Our case is that we make a contribution. We want to continue to make a positive contribution to democratic society, and we would like to see some recognition for it.

Mr McBurney: I have recovered my lost train of thought.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is better than I normally do. When it is gone, it is gone with me.

Mr McBurney: The guidelines that we set forward tried to reflect what we encountered when we went out and surveyed the territory. What we found was that some schools, for example, would be warm to the idea of an affiliation with the board of education, the Shapiro idea, if the other matters of staff selection and guided admission and curricular freedom were protected. Others, however, are wary of that. We find that most boards are not prepared for that kind of discussion or, in some cases, they are even hostile to it.

Our proposal recommended four categories, and I guess you would be saying "Different strokes for different folks" in the sense that those operating under boards of education, I think, would tend to be more conforming by nature perhaps, and those that want to operate at arm's length, the independently funded school, would perhaps take less money and be happy to have that distance. Then there are private schools, and we call that the private school category, that simply do not want funding. Beyond that is the home school, which is a special category.

But the commonality would be the satisfactory instruction definition so that nobody could say, "We're not going to tell you what we are doing in here." Schools would be open to reasonable kinds of inspection.

The accountability structure in the other provinces: I think British Columbia is the one that is maybe most appealing in that the external evaluation committees that come in from the ministry are made up, in part, of people selected from the independent schools. There is some sensitivity there to the nature of the school as part of its evaluation.

That, to some extent, moderates the tendency of educators out of one stream—let's say, our

faculties of education, used to public administration—wanting to measure everything in terms of their knowledge of education. They begin to develop an understanding that in a Waldorf school, a Montessori school or a Jewish school there are different pedagogical standards at work. They must be somewhat sensitive to that in order to do justice to the school when it is being evaluated.

That requires a lot of give and take on both sides. The thing we find encouraging in looking at those provinces is that the concourse developed between public educators and private educators has improved the rapport. They will testify that they have learned something from this on both sides of it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I found your report very interesting. Thank you very much.

The Chairman: We do have one more questioner, even though we are out of time again. Mr Jackson.

Mr Jackson: I too appreciate your brief. I always enjoy the challenge you present to this committee when you are before us frequently. I am concerned, as you indicated in your brief, about equal access to program. I think it strikes at the heart of the opportunities we are providing for all children in this province.

I would like you to react, if you could, to a couple of points. Let me say that it is somewhat disturbing that when you come before us, you challenge us with the same language that we as politicians hear extensively on a variety of issues—the notions of discrimination, equality, access. That is the language we listened to and reacted to when we dealt with pay equity, for example. It is the language and the sensitivity that we embraced when we dealt with special education in the late 1970s and the early 1980s when I was involved in that debate.

We reacted to that, and we reacted to it most recently with francophone rights. They are not necessarily entrenched in the Constitution but are entrenched as a political opportunity; also with heritage languages. I guess I am getting a stronger sense that alternative and independent schools are being driven back in terms of where they sit. You are all dealing with the same language and the same legitimate points.

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Now, for example, the curriculum needs of a great number of our students are less important than perhaps their language needs. That is now becoming a significant flip in terms of the priorities that this province is setting, so I want

you to react. If we can deal with some minor areas for improvement, I will illustrate three which concern me greatly. On the issue of busing—I know my colleague, Noble Villeneuve, has expressed the concern that, when there is need for infilling on certain bus routes and co-operation—this committee just heard recently of public funds going into transportation. We are going to be doing transportation review. They were so delighted to inform us that, “By the way, we are going to be working co-operatively with the separate school board.” It begs the question, why are we not talking to the alternative schools in terms of allowing them to integrate and utilize that public resource effectively? I know of certain instances in the province where that would work.

The second area is in the area of the discrimination against special needs children in this province. I cite the case of a medical program in this province. If we just separate the educational and academic needs of the children in alternative and independent schools, but I cited the case of Wally Elgersma who, while he was in the public school he received a Ministry of Health program in order to allow him to live with dignity and comfort in the classroom, and that was removed from him as a consequence of his moving to an alternative or independent school. I think that is something this committee should look at, those forms of discrimination against handicapped children on noneducational programs.

So maybe there is something this committee can salvage in light of—as you are well aware, in the last several meetings when the minister has been present, there has been an indication that the agenda matters will not really be addressed. In other words, this committee might address them, but in terms of the government’s announcement—I recall receiving a brief from you and the night before, the Premier (Mr Peterson) announced that there will be no funding and the government has no intentions of looking at alternative and independent school funding. A similar situation occurred that day as occurred earlier this morning.

So could you react a bit to that? Then finally, Madam Chair, to be brief, I would request of the committee that, as Mrs O’Neill requested a summary of all the recommendations of the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education that have been implemented to date, I too would like an identical report from the ministry to indicate all those recommendations of the Shapiro Commis-

sion on Private Schools in Ontario which have been implemented to date or are in the process of implementation. Possibly, we might be in a position to compare the two. If you would react to that briefly—

Mr McBurney: I think our thrust is that the committee has a clear responsibility to deal with the substantive question of choice in education. To do so, it has to look at some very fundamental principles very closely. How is our social diversity reflected in education? That is a big enough problem that I would suggest this committee could virtually take that as its mandate, because that is the framework for Ontario education we are talking about. It is a departure from the assumptions of the past, to some extent.

I think that is, from our point of view, the primary responsibility of this committee. We tried also to be sensitive to the fact that we are all in new territory, in a sense, when we talk about a pluralistic structure for education and we have a number of court considerations and other things that would have to be factored into that. So that does take careful time and there would certainly have to be a forum for discussion and give and take. So we call for that and we want to be sensitive that we cannot just snap fingers and expect that grant to be given tomorrow.

But, in the meantime, we do think, and you have already pointed out that there are many areas where we do not think it takes a change of legislation at all. It simply takes a change of attitude, that these children are children in Ontario. Their parents are taxpayers. They are entitled to these services. And so, we have that peculiar role of saying what is really called for here is equality, or at least equity, if it is going to be a graduated system of support, but there are things that could be done right away.

We do not want to give the impression that we are here to be satisfied with crumbs from the master's table. But the fact of the matter is it would help the rural schools very much if they had busing. You met the Anjema boy, and there are others, you mentioned one, who are routinely denied publicly paid services, sometimes under the administration of other ministries or in joint ministry relationships, because they go to a private school and there is no fit.

Mr Jackson: As a half-empty bus drives by their front door.

Mr McBurney: Yes, so the bus drives by. What is the message of discrimination in Ontario? Or let me put it another way, what message of tolerance are we teaching when the

bus drives by and there is a kid standing in the snowbank? You are quite right. I think some of those things the committee could be very precise about, but I would not want it to be at the expense of what I just see to be the much greater responsibility of dealing with the whole thrust of education and some of those very fundamental rights.

That question of the prior right is a very fundamental question. We have seen what happens. I probably should not go that far, but you can cite Nazi Germany or Iron Curtain countries where state education has been used in ways that are not good for the public interest.

Dr Vriend: On that particular point, it is hard to tease out of an educational policy and system all the specifics that relate to discrimination and access. One of the things that independent schools would be encouraged by is, for example, some movement or some recommendation from this committee on movement on transportation and textbooks, which were also the recommendations of limited support in the commission's report. We realize that it is difficult to tease that out and to do that because we also, in independent schools, want a strong and viable public school system to be part of this province's scene, but a level of frustration does grow when those issues are seemingly systematically ignored.

You mentioned busing. I was a school administrator, about 15 years ago now, when the legislation came in that school buses would no longer just have lights; they would have stop arms for safety. Because this was a matter of expense, the school boards quickly said, "That is fine. We will put stop arms on our school buses, but we need a grant for that." As a principal of an independent school, it was of some frustration to me that the tax moneys were suitable for the safety of the children who went to the public or separate schools, but not for the safety of the children whom I cared about and was given responsibility for. They simply said: "Look, I am sorry. That is too bad." We had to go to those parents and say: "We are sorry. We know you are paying a lot, but you are going to have to pay more because legislation has come in. It is good legislation, for the safety of children." That kind of thing, though, does bring frustration.

Mr Jackson: Very well put. I wish we had more time. I appreciate your comments.

The Chairman: Mrs O'Neill assures me that she has a very brief final question.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wondered if either of you would comment on something that was brought forward by the previous presenters and that is the

new regulations regarding heritage language. Have you had the similar or same experience as the Jewish schools? Or are you into heritage language, I guess is what I am asking?

Mr McBurney: The majority of our members are not, and we have not had any direct feedback about a problem. We took a position, though, before the committee that we were pleased that the government was apparently making that program accessible in so far as parents of students in an independent school could apply for a program under a board of education. It was our understanding that, as in North York, the program could be delivered on the premises of the independent schools where they were already there.

We made the further suggestion—because that is a matter of some dispute within boards about whether those programs should be in the regular schoolday or on an extended schoolday—that some independent schools, and we just make that as a suggestion, might be willing to act as pilot projects where the program would be integrated and tend to demonstrate to the board what effect that does or does not have on the curriculum and delivery of the program. Maybe the independent schools stand at enough distance that the board of education could do that, but it would require, of course, that they want to co-operate with that independent school community. So in principle we are very much for it. In practice we are not directly involved with any school that I know of in my membership at the present time.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr McBurney and Dr Vriend, for your presentation today. Could I ask you for one more thing before you go? I think it would be very interesting to have a list of your—I think it is 95 schools you have, independent and alternative schools—just to see the diversity of the type of school you have. If any of them are specifically targeted to a type of population, that might also be very helpful if you have that readily available.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the geographical location would be fascinating for members as well.

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Mr McBurney: Okay.

The Chairman: Not to put you to too much work, but if that is readily available, I think it would be helpful.

Mr McBurney: It is easily done.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Dr Vriend: Thank you for your attention.

The Chairman: Our next presenters will be the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. I will start with an apology, as we are running 40 minutes late. I hope it does not interfere with your schedule too much today.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mrs Nichols: Thank you very much. We appreciate the opportunity. Even if we did have to sit and listen, it was interesting listening to the previous presentation.

I am Eva Nichols. I am the executive director of the association. My co-presenter is Lynn Ziraldo. She is the chairman of our educational policy and legislation committee, the parent of two children, both of whom have learning disabilities, and also sits on a special education advisory committee and chairs PAAC, which is the parent-associations advisory committee on the special education advisory committee. She wears many hats and brings a level of involvement and expertise to our presentation.

We have decided to divide our presentation in such a way that I will make some introductory comments and then Mrs Ziraldo will actually read to you our recommendations. We are not going to read the whole presentation, because I am sure you will read it at your leisure. We really just want to highlight a number of things.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario is now in its 26th year of existence and represents approximately 800,000 people in Ontario who are known or presumed to have learning disabilities. If one looks at the school-age population, that would mean approximately 180,000 school-age students in Ontario.

Just to sort of bring that into actually identified children, in the last report the Ministry of Education published, based on the 1987 reports of the minister, there are some 60,000 children in the province who have formally been identified as having a specific learning disability. Even with that narrowing of focus, we are still talking about a large group of children whose needs we advocate for. They certainly make up the largest single exceptionality grouping the school system serves.

In deciding how to focus in on this huge issue of funding, we decided that first we would look at special education funding. I apologize, but obviously some of the comments will be similar or the same as the ones I made yesterday afternoon, so I will keep those brief. Second, we also want to talk to you a bit about the issues of

indirect funding. What we mean by "indirect" is funding for programs which are not necessarily absolute classroom programs delivered by a teacher but which really contribute to the quality of life of a child with learning disabilities.

First of all, in the area of direct funding, we were certainly very concerned when the legislative grant changes came out earlier this year, because we see that in the general thrust of the school system within Ontario to integrate special-needs children there have been other thrusts of integration. The integration of the funding is one of the things we are not particularly happy about, because we feel very strongly that it will be an avenue for some of the school boards to discontinue some of their programming.

The way children with learning disabilities are served in this province varies quite considerably. Many boards do have a full range of services, ranging from self-contained classes, even making referrals to the provincial demonstration schools, resource withdrawal, and regular class placement with some support, but there are quite a number of boards that already do not deliver any specialized services to children with learning disabilities, on the grounds that the children will make out all right in the regular classroom.

I would say to you, as the select committee on education, that making out all right is really not what this is about. If we buy into the fact that excellence in education is the thing we would all want to see, then children who have learning disabilities certainly require some support. Therefore, our concern about the funding is: Are we opening the door to people saying, "Here we are; we just don't have to provide this kind of funding"?

Yesterday when we were discussing the reason why groups are interested in returning to the direct funding of special education, the one item that really none of us focused on—you as questioners, we as presenters, or even Mr Brumer—is that we understand from the minister that what happened this year is only the first of a four-year change, so we expect additional changes next year, the year after and the year after that. At the moment we certainly do not know what those changes are, and listening to your earlier conversation I am not at all sure you know either.

It is a concern when you have a dramatic change occurring in year one and you are sort of watching with trepidation what is going to happen in years two, three and four. That is really a major concern to us as an organization and we

do not believe that the current changes are going to benefit children with learning disabilities throughout the province, although we will readily admit that in some boards there is not going to be any difference, and those boards that are currently doing really well will probably carry on doing so, but there are many others where the level of accountability and the level of service delivery to children with learning disabilities are really not particularly acceptable or suitable and the children are not learning, not growing and not achieving their potential.

In terms of the issues relating to indirect funding, what we find is that the population we represent is always, in spite of its large size, saying: "Me too. Let us in." We are knocking on doors. We are trying to get our foot into cracks where access is denied. If one looks at such school-based programs as the home care program which delivers speech pathology, by definition they exclude children who have learning disabilities, because the language-processing difficulties of this particular population do not happen to be an actual physical language articulation problem.

Other programs that are funded through other ministries but have a really major impact on the educational progress of these children, such as the assistive devices program, such as some of the home care type of programs that the Ministry of Community and Social Services funds, respite care, etc., all of these programs are currently denied to the population who have learning disabilities. The argument that is always given is, "For many people who have learning disabilities, we're only talking quality of life, we are not talking survival." It would seem to me that in a province as well-to-do and as committed to the quality of life of its citizens, that is a very poor argument. We feel very strongly that sooner or later somebody is going to have to say that we are talking here about a large population and their quality of life really does matter.

At our last year's annual meeting, the London chapter of our association brought forward some very interesting statistics relating to training and continuing education for adults with learning disabilities. Arising out of that came a recommendation that our membership passed unanimously, that we approach the province to establish a provincial task force on learning disabilities. Based on your experience, you may think that the very last thing anybody should want is another task force. The reason, though, we felt it was worth while doing is that we had a look at what happened to the task force in the United States that reported to Congress. I am not

sure our task force would have the same sort of recommendations, but those recommendations have resulted in an increase in research and an increase in attitudes towards the particular population. It has not represented a particularly large financial burden, but it has really helped the individuals.

What has happened with that was that we approached the social policy committee of cabinet, and through Mrs Caplan, who was chairing it at the time, we met with a number of ministers, including the Minister of Education, who was given a lead role in dealing with this item. We met with them, we made a presentation, and we were told that there would be a decision shortly. That "shortly" has now stretched into five and a half months, which I recognize is short in bureaucracy. Nevertheless, one of our concerns is that as time goes on—for example, all the ministers who were involved have changed in this last shuffle, so in a sense we have to rebrief everybody. While perhaps it may be outside your mandate to be commenting on such a thing, we are bringing that to you as one of our recommendations.

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Further, we would really like to see you recommend that all the support services that are available to children with special needs should be allocated not on the basis of the defined exceptionality but on the basis of need. We do not believe that speech pathology should be delivered to every child who is exceptional whether he needs it or not, in the same way that you would not put glasses or a hearing aid on a child who does not need it. On the other hand, to make the decisions based on the identified exceptionality rather than the truly identified need is really not acceptable, in our opinion.

I think that because of the way time is going I will pass on to Mrs Ziraldo and then we will be happy to answer your questions.

Mrs Ziraldo: Thanks, Eva. Basically what I want to address right now is our three main recommendations to you. I am glad we have had this privilege again to be able to present to you. They are on pages 3 and 4.

The first one is that the format for the general legislative grants be reordered such that the special education grants are once again direct grants instead of a part of the per pupil base grants under the ceiling applicable for other base grants. I think that is very straightforward, and we will definitely answer questions afterwards.

The second recommendation is that full tracking of special education expenditures be

reinstated such that school boards are required to report to the Ministry of Education on the allocation of these funds after sharing the information with their special education advisory committees, which, as you all know, are well known as SEACs.

The third one is that the regional offices of the Ministry of Education be empowered to hold school boards accountable for the expenditure of these funds on special educational services for exceptional pupils.

Those are basically our three recommendations to do with the direct funding. Eva has addressed indirect funding, and I will just highlight. We recommend that the select committee support the establishment of a provincial learning disabilities task force. I think Eva has given you the rationale for that, and as a parent I highly recommend that that happen.

The second one is that the select committee recommend to the Legislature that the expansion of existing and evolving social service and health programs include people with learning disabilities as appropriate for the identified needs of this population.

As a parent of a child who has severe learning disabilities compounded by medical problems, this is definitely a burden on myself and other members of the family and other parents who are in the same position when we do not have access to those types of funds that are available to others.

With that I will close. I think we have about 15 or 18 minutes or so to answer any questions.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. We will start questions with Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have no questions around the recommendations at all. The committee will have to decide just how far afield from funding it wants to go in terms of some of its recommendations. Your questions about the task force are something we will have to discuss among ourselves, and I am not sure what ancillary kinds of recommendations we would want to make. We may be having enough trouble just coming to a consensus on some of the more elemental matters of funding.

I wanted to just ask a question on statistics. For a long time we used the statistic that approximately 10 per cent of the population has some kind of learning disability, so the question really rises in my mind, after our experience with Bill 82: What has been the statistical reality in terms of who has been identified as having a learning disability in the schools of Ontario since the

boards have had to become much more directly involved than they used to be prior to that decision? Do you know what the statistics are?

Mrs Ziraldo: In some of the boards I have dealt with through chairing PAAC the percentage is definitely low of learning-disabled problems that are identified, especially at the secondary level. It seems that somehow at the elementary level we are doing much better perhaps in early identification. When it comes to secondary, they feel they are cured, and that concerns us, because obviously they are not and we know that and they need those strategies, especially going into work towards post-secondary.

In some of the boards it is six per cent. Definitely there is a lot that needs to—it is higher. Part of that is the whole issue of early identification, but Eva might want to add some other statistics as well.

Mrs Nichols: Just to get into very specific numbers, if one accepts the 10 per cent figure, people always ask how that breaks down. We usually say three per cent around mild learning disabilities, and many of those children probably will not be identified because they can indeed be helped in the regular classroom. About another three to four per cent would be the medium learning disabilities. They certainly need some help but not necessarily self-contained classes. Probably the last three per cent would be severe learning disabilities, a few of whom, perhaps 100 or 150 children, would need the very specialized programs of the demonstration schools. The rest would need some self-contained programming.

The way the actual figures break down is that of all the children who are identified as exceptional in the province, about five per cent of the total school age population is identified as having learning disabilities. Unfortunately, though, you cannot say that in that case we are doing pretty well, because the range is as low as about 0.1 per cent in some boards and as high as 12 per cent in other boards. I would say that both of those are probably extremes that we would not want. Generally speaking, as Lynn mentioned, at the secondary level it is significantly lower.

When you look at how these children are served, a very small percentage, only something like 11,000 children in the province, are served in any kind of self-contained programming. I must stress that we do not believe that self-contained classes are the only way to serve children with learning disabilities. But for many children who do have severe learning disabilities, at some point in their educational career, some very small group or even one-to-one

training, even if it is only for a year, can make a tremendous difference. So that 11,000 is very low.

Just to confuse you with a few more statistics, there are two others. One is that the Ontario Child Health Study identified that six per cent of the child population of the province have attentional deficit dysfunction. All the statistics that are now in on correlating ADD with learning disabilities imply that something like 75 per cent of children who have ADD will also have an accompanying learning disability. So that actually ties in reasonably well with the numbers the school boards have identified.

The final statistic is that, based on the last census, the Office of Disabled Persons issued a statistical profile of disabled persons in Ontario. In that, they actually identified 16 per cent of the child population as having learning disabilities. We were very surprised that it was that high, but when we talked to some of the people who were actually involved, we believe that as learning disabilities were not actually defined, obviously the range was wider; that many families whose child perhaps had a sensory impairment or some other problem may very well have been identified them as having a learning disability. Those are the numbers we have available at the moment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So in general terms you are happy with the identification process of the elementary panel; you are concerned more about the identification at the secondary level.

As a committee, where can we get our hands on the kind of profile which would tell us, for instance, the percentage of dyslexic versus the attention problems and that kind of thing? Where can we get that kind of summary of what identified exceptionalities are taking place within learning disabilities?

Mrs Nichols: There is no such thing. Unfortunately, many of the boards that are identifying children as exceptional are not even prepared to state that the exceptionality is a learning disability. That is an increasing trend, that the child is identified as exceptional at the identification and placement review committee and then some of the boards are using marvellous things like C2 and 4H and other such designations so that they do not use the name of the exceptionality but rather some code they have for themselves.

Also, many other boards are not prepared to use the term—not just learning disability; any exceptionality—on the grounds that the legislation does not strictly require it. The legislation says they have to identify the youngster as

exceptional. The analogy we tend to use is that if you went to your doctor and your doctor said to you, "Well, you are sick," and that is where he left it, you would be pretty unhappy with that, or even if he said, "You have a fever," but no more than that.

For many families, being told that your child is exceptional, and not being told what the exceptionality is, paralyses the family in its efforts to get appropriate services for that child, because in terms of outside services the word "exceptional" means nothing.

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Mr Jackson: The word is all-encompassing.

Mrs Nichols: That is right too. It is very hard to know exactly what the child needs.

In another way, very often a family that has an exceptional child, whatever the exceptionality, is really a family in crisis, and having access to a support system such as our association and all the other associations is really helpful. But if you do not know what your child's exceptionality is, you really do not know whom to go to for help.

Mrs Ziraldo: I would just like to add also that in some cases the boards are identifying the population of attention-deficit disorder or some of our learning disability under "behaviour," which again we would have a major concern with, because are they addressing the behaviour before the learning disability or are they addressing the learning disability before the behaviour, and what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Statistics-wise, you have to look at that aspect too, and that would concern us as well, if their needs are not being met and they are only addressing the one component.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You are essentially telling us we are not going to be able to get hold of that information, or even if it would be useful to us, or do you know?

Mrs Nichols: It may be useful for you to have a look at the summary that the ministry compiled of the identification of exceptionalities in a more gross sense, but at least you would see what numbers are identified and how they are being served with the different exceptionalities, but the breakdown for learning disabilities does not exist.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am sure the chair will get us that.

The Chairman: Personally, I will do that. I will turn that over to Dr Bob Gardner and he can get that to you.

I would like to thank the Learning Disabilities Association for its presentation today. As al-

ways, you have provided valuable insight into special education in Ontario and into your particular recommendations.

Our final presentation this morning will be from the Association for Bright Children. Welcome back, Mrs Walker. If you like, you can introduce the other members of your panel and then begin whenever you are ready. Again, our apologies for the late start.

ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN

Mrs Walker: I understand you have many things to discuss. I would like to introduce to you this morning the two people I have brought with me. Joan Sayer sits on the special education advisory committee representing the Association for Bright Children on the Metropolitan Separate School Board and is also the president of the Scarborough Association for Bright Children. Estelle Payne, on my right, represents ABC on the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board and is the provincial co-ordinator for our association for special education advisory committee members.

A fourth person was actually going to be with us. She is from Etobicoke and I am quite concerned because she is usually on time. There was apparently a chlorine explosion in the Etobicoke area this morning, so I am concerned that she may be confined to her home because of that.

As always, we are very pleased to come before the select committee and to have an opportunity to discuss our concerns with you.

One of the things I want to draw to your attention is that we do have members of the Association for Bright Children sitting on 79 special education advisory committees around the province. So in pulling together our information for this presentation, it is information that has come from many of those representatives as well as our provincial executive and the many phone calls and requests we get throughout the year.

Our main concern, of course, is the program that is out there and the services that are available for our children. As you will be aware, we do support the full continuum of services, and I think it is extremely important that you are aware of our concern in that area. There are concerns about identification, and if you choose to, we can go into some of those at a later time or later this morning.

We are very concerned about the funding that is necessary to provide these programs. We find that some parents are discouraged, especially

those parents of gifted youngsters who are discouraged when they ask for an identification and placement review committee to identify their children for concerns and the needs they have, because principals initially say: "There is not any funding. There is not any money available." We know there is money available, and it seems to be an easy statement to make at first because of the attitude that people sometimes have towards the needs of our gifted kids.

With the changes in the general legislative grants, as we expressed yesterday, we had some grave concerns about what was happening. We have had contact from boards that have decided that because of the changes in the general legislative grants, there is a considerably reduced amount of money available in those boards for special education programs and services.

We also know there are a couple of boards at least that have been reported through to us that have had programs, not necessarily for gifted youngsters but changing roles and development of programs within the boards, which they planned to implement in the 1989-90 year but which have been put on hold after the GLGs were presented.

There is also a lot of confusion and fear out there on the part of parents as to what the roll-in of the special education grant with the per-pupil grant means: "Does it mean there will be less special education, and will our children not be served in an appropriate way?"

The accountability we discussed yesterday, and it certainly is a major concern with our board. The reports to the minister that have to be done have changed over the last number of years, and how this reporting has seemed to many of us to reduce the accountability is of great concern.

One of the major factors in this year's report to the minister was an opportunity to explain and celebrate the exemplary programs that boards had implemented. We are really anxious to see what comes from that. We know that many boards did share their exemplary programs. We also know of some other boards that said, "We can't be bothered." We are very concerned about that because we know there are many good programs happening out there in the province and there really is a need to share what we are doing here in Ontario. Although it is not among the recommendations, certainly research and sharing of that information has to be part of the responsibility of the Ministry of Education as well as the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Skills Development, which now come under one umbrella.

Transportation is a major concern that has been expressed over the years in terms of special education services for gifted pupils in the province. Unfortunately, in many areas of the province we are finding that the transportation of gifted pupils to part-time programs and sometimes to full-time programs is done in a different way from the transportation policies and methods they use for other exceptionalities.

In actual fact, there have been areas where, first of all, boards have said, "Nobody wants to come because the kids can't come on their own." That is difficult in a large rural board where you are asking parents to transport children to a central area, but as well it is a concern in the major areas. We would really like the ministry and the boards to be taking a look at the funding of transportation to make sure it is equitable for all exceptional children who are served, because certainly we have found a discrepancy.

The last area I want to touch on—and we did discuss it slightly yesterday—is the summer enrichment programs and the need for funding for those programs. You asked yesterday, Mrs O'Neill, for a definition of "enrichment." There are many definitions, just as there are many definitions of "gifted." Enrichment really is an opportunity for all children to build on the core of information that they have and to go beyond.

As I said yesterday, what we find from parents, students and teachers is that those children who may not have had success in some area but do have basic core information, they find success in a summer program. It is success usually in a school setting which makes coming back to school in the fall a more positive situation.

We are not asking it for gifted kids only or for bright kids; we are certainly asking it for all segments of the school population. If I were a child with remedial reading or math problems, I think I would have had just about enough of it in the 10 months of school, and I am not sure that would be what I would want to do in the summer. We know it is important for some of those children, but there are ways that those programs of enrichment in the summer do support and help many kids.

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If we can go to the recommendations, which are on page 4, I must apologize to you. My photocopier became quite creative and some of you will have little glitches in it. I do apologize for that, but I was not going to run off 1,000 copies of each just to make sure they were all clean.

Recommendation 1: That the Ministry of Education ensure that funding to provide special education programs and services is identifiable and that boards can be held accountable for the expenditures of those funds. We feel that special education grants should be direct grants and not part of the per-pupil grant structure.

Recommendation 2: That procedures for monitoring the special education programs and services be enhanced and that special education advisory committees be an integral partner in that monitoring process.

Recommendation 3: That the Ministry of Education ensure that the policy for transportation of exceptional pupils is uniform and equitable.

Recommendation 4: That the Ministry of Education provide funds again for summer enrichment programs for all students in Ontario.

I would like to leave some time for questioning. I know you are running late. Thank you very much.

The Chairman: Thank you. Now we will open for questions from members.

Mr Jackson: I am interested in the last recommendation. Being familiar with recommendations 1 through 3, I would like if you could expand a little on recommendation 4 with a bit more background information on the problem there and the extent to which there may be differences among boards in their treatment of that issue.

Mrs Walker: The summer enrichment programs?

Mr Jackson: Yes.

Mrs Walker: I was quite surprised this year because I had not realized that the ministry had decided to take away funding of summer enrichment programs. I began to get calls from parents. I also got them from boards. They said, "What are you doing about it?" Of course, this is one of the opportunities we have had to make a statement on that. It appeared to come out of the blue.

What we have found is that there are some boards that have chosen to continue those summer enrichment programs, although there are situations as well where they have decided that they must as well ask fees and the fees have put it out of the reach of many of the students, which is really unfortunate.

Mr Jackson: On behalf of this committee, and as well as the Association for Bright Children, we could request a copy of the ministry memo which was obviously sent to boards announcing

this withdrawal of program and support; and perhaps we could get a fuller explanation from the ministry as to the reasons why it was changed and the degree to which the ministry is concerned or is monitoring the notion that boards are charging a fee for service for a program that falls well within the variety of mandates which are publicly articulated by the government and the ministry.

The Chairman: Mr Brumer, if you would like to take the fourth microphone there, you could perhaps answer two of Mr Jackson's concerns at this time and also mention whether there has been a specific notice that has gone out to the boards.

Mr Brumer: First of all, the funding for the enrichment programs: In 1982 the Ministry of Education made it very clear that general interest programs would not be funded as part of continuing education, and at that time a supplementary amount was added to the per-pupil amounts to assist school boards in providing some community services. General interest courses are not funded by the ministry. School boards may provide them and may charge a fee if they so choose.

With regard to the enrichment programs, what we are dealing with here are programs that are offered during the summer at the elementary school level. That is the issue we are addressing. A large number of these programs tended to be of a general interest nature and in quite a number of instances tended to provide something tantamount to day care, summer-camp-type programs. I do not wish to characterize all the programs in that vein, but that was certainly true of a fair number of them. That was one of the things that finally pushed us to the position of re-examining the position on this point.

Also, in the context of reviewing the definition of continuing education, which was something that was undertaken about a year ago, the definition for continuing education was to include summer school: elementary programs that were for remediation purposes, basically as a carry-on, for a pupil who may have had some difficulty, into the summer period, to assist with that difficulty so that pupil would not lose out starting the next year with his peers. That was the definition that was used.

It is unfortunate that some programs such as programs for exceptional pupils may have been dropped as part of this exercise. It is something that we would certainly have to look at, but the overall direction was certainly to set our priorities. In a time where money is demanded for all kinds of reasons, the provision by school boards

of programs tantamount to summer recreational-type activities was not something that we wanted to encourage.

Mr Jackson: I did not expect to invite a debate on that point, but was there a specific memorandum dated and circulated to all boards addressing the information you have just given us? We have established that the Association for Bright Children was not notified, or perhaps their affiliate groups, but can we get a specific memo or did you just phone every board and tell them?

Mr Brumer: No. Two things were done. First, in May 1988 there was a meeting of the associations for continuing education. At the time, the outline of the changes in the regulations—they were not really changes; this was the first time we actually got into providing regulations pertaining to the definition of continuing education and they were shared with those associations.

Subsequently, in November 1988, at a meeting that the deputy minister attended, this was again reiterated. Then in February, when the general legislative grants regulations were released, there was a letter that went out with those to the chairmen of boards and the directors of school boards and there was a paragraph referencing that item in there as well as the changes.

Mr Jackson: Are we talking about the Bell report recommendations on adult and continuing education? Is that part of the genesis of those discussions and the government's announcement of those kinds of funds when they increased those a year and a half ago?

Mr Brumer: No.

Mr Jackson: We are talking about something different?

Mr Brumer: Yes. The development of a regulation related to the third form of contract which has to do with defining of who is a continuing education teacher. If memory serves me right, there has been a piece of legislation pertaining to that, and the regulations pertaining to it.

Mr Jackson: I am familiar with that now. It was more contractual, and amendments to the act, you were dealing with, not the Bell report?

Mr Brumer: No.

Mr Jackson: Now I understand. I would like to get further reaction from the Association for Bright Children, if I could, now that we have that information.

The Chairman: I think Mrs Sayer had a comment.

Mrs Sayer: If I may, to pursue the point on the school enrichment programs. Once again, my experience is through the Metropolitan Separate School Board. One of the issues I would like to ensure that the committee is aware of is that the summer enrichment programs are open to all students. There certainly is a recommendation on the part of the teacher or principal, but we are not dealing with just exceptional students in enrichment programs.

The second thing is yes, I think there have been changes in the type of courses that have been offered. For example, recreation and parks do offer many recreational programs, and so our programs are limited to those which can be enhanced, built upon from the regular core school programs. Let me illustrate that. In the computer program of a couple of years ago, the Metropolitan Separate School Board was certainly audited, as were several other school boards providing summer programs, to ensure that in fact the computer courses that were offered were of a particular nature. They were looking for students playing games and that kind of thing, whereas to enhance the programming was a key concern. So there was auditing on the part of the ministry, and I think that is excellent so that we understand what kind of enrichment courses we can offer.

I want to reiterate the point that we feel it can be a very positive experience for some children in the summer. We think there is a great deal of value in having summer courses. For example, our board this summer was caught very quickly in terms of whether we go with the courses or not. We do not have the funding from the ministry and our board this year decided we would provide summer enrichment courses. I do not know at this point in time what the decision will be for next year.

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The Chairman: I have two people on the list, Mrs O'Neill and Mr Smith. I am not sure if they are supplementaries to this line of questioning or a new one.

Mr D. W. Smith: Supplementary. What are the fees you say are prohibitive to some of the students? What are the fees that are being charged through some of these summer enrichment programs?

Mrs Walker: There was one in the Ottawa area that went from somewhat under \$100 that had been charged previously, and it was at least \$300 or \$400.

Mr D. W. Smith: When it was funded it was \$100, and because there was a lack of funding it went to \$300.

Mrs Walker: Yes.

Mr D. W. Smith: You do not know whether that is the extreme or whether that is the average.

Mrs Walker: I think that would be one of the extremes in that situation. Certainly the numbers of children went from the hundreds down to below 100. It was quite substantial. I can supply those numbers if you would like.

The Chairman: If you do have that information available, it would help.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess my question is turning into a supplementary. In Ottawa, would that be the Ottawa Board of Education? Have you got that information?

Mrs Walker: I have that information and I will get it to you.

Mrs O'Neill: My question was just another data question regarding special education advisory committees; I think you said you were sitting on 79 SEACs. Is that the number of boards that are providing education for the exceptionally gifted, or are you into every school board? I just wondered how your association was able to respond across the province.

Mrs Walker: The concern is that we do not have members in every single municipality all over the province. We have about 35 chapters, so we do have some who are independent members sitting on SEACs in other areas. We did a survey a few years ago, and I believe I gave a copy of the questionnaire and the responses to that last year when we presented, and our information and percentages came out to approximately the same number as the ministry had found in terms of the numbers of children identified.

What we also saw, and it was just there, was that where there are Association for Bright Children members on SEACs, obviously there are more things happening for gifted kids. We are finding that in those areas where there is not an ABC representative or someone who is sitting on special education advisory committees supporting the needs of those children, very often the programming is strictly what might happen in a classroom, so it is a concern.

Mrs O'Neill: That is very interesting information.

Mrs Walker: One of our concerns is that we are probably the only voluntary organization and do not have a lot of funds. When we get funds, we hope to be able to expand the knowledge base of the community out there so it knows we do exist and that it does have rights in talking to parents.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you suggesting you do not have an executive director?

Mrs Walker: No, we do not have an executive director.

Mrs O'Neill: So you are the only strictly voluntary organization.

Mrs Walker: As far as I am aware, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Is that right? I did not know that either.

Mrs Walker: I think our visibility is increasing with time, and one of these times we are going to have to get our act together to get some funding. Of course, it is the attitude thing: do gifted children need anything? And why do you, as an association, need support? We are getting a number of things together.

Mrs O'Neill: You have made some excellent contributions, and certainly some of your chapters are outstanding in their communities.

Mrs Walker: We hope our chapters are out there representing gifted kids and bright kids but also, when they sit on SEACs, that such is not their only purpose. They are there to take a look at and consider the needs of all children.

Mrs O'Neill: Be assured that is happening in my neck of the woods.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mrs O'Neill, and thank you to the Association for Bright Children, not only for your presentation today but for all your fine work in the province.

Mrs Walker: Thank you very much, and good luck in your deliberations.

The Chairman: I think we will need it. Mr Brumer has advised that he does have some comments concerning the pooling briefing and that issue.

Mr Jackson: Is that the issue that Richard and I raised earlier?

The Chairman: That is right. I mentioned to Richard before he left that this would be occurring, but he had to leave.

Perhaps Mr Brumer can speak and then you might wish to continue after.

Mr Jackson: I for one would like to know the basis on which he is making his comments. Is this information you have just now received? Do you have something to hand out?

Mr Brumer: In response to the request that the committee has made regarding material to be handed out from yesterday's briefing, we do not have any kind of material that was handed out at that time. A member of our staff has come over who was at the briefing yesterday and I would

beg the committee's indulgence for a couple of minutes so he can fill the committee in on what did transpire yesterday. If need be, we can provide a much fuller and in-depth discussion of this in camera, as will be offered on 20 September in Sudbury. If the committee would permit, I would like to ask Brian to explain what happened yesterday.

The Chairman: Are you requesting that the discussion now be in camera as well?

Mr Brumer: Not necessarily, no.

Mr Jackson: I would find that acceptable on two conditions. First, that Brian would endeavour to contact Richard in his office any time after two o'clock. Richard's departure was for medical reasons and was rather urgent, but I would want him to benefit from your verbal presentation prior to the weekend. Second, can we request something in more detail, perhaps in the time prior to our 10 o'clock start in Kingston on Monday?

The Chairman: Are you talking about a verbal or a written presentation prior?

Mr Jackson: A written summary of the points raised. The fact that ministry personnel would have made their comments from their own written notes would indicate that there should not be a great difficulty in getting something in writing for this committee to look at Monday morning.

I am prepared to listen now on the one simple assurance that Richard gets the same briefing at some point today. If you would endeavour to do that, then I would be pleased to proceed. Failing that, I would have to request that all members have equal access to that at the same time.

Mr Lenglet: I will do so.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Just for the record, Mr Jackson, I did discuss this with Mr Johnston before he left and agreed that we would try to get information to him, but I thank you for your consideration in pointing that out.

Furthermore, from Mr Brumer's brief comments to me, I think the ministry is also willing to continue this discussion during our travels should there be further information that we either request or would like to be brought up to date on.

Mr Lenglet: The briefing session of yesterday afternoon was held for stakeholders, the trustees and teacher groups, related to certain impending matters for which we were in the process of drafting legislation or policy approvals in matters that generally became termed the "pooling" legislation and that which was to be attached to it.

I will come to the details of that. It was to bring everyone up to date on those matters, to consult and get their concerns as this moved forward.

The first specific matter dealt with—and I did the briefing on this—was the pooling issue. There was no written material at all. In fact, our briefing was that the legislation was in the process of being drafted and that there were no substantive changes in the policy as it was announced on 18 May by the then Minister of Education, Chris Ward. As I recall, there were no questions on that. It was a very short and clear statement that it was proceeding and that we were bringing the legislation into order to capture the policy direction.

The second matter dealt with was the single panel reporting. I did the briefing on that matter. The single panel reporting involved a history of where the panels themselves came from. Going back prior to 1969, there were some 2,000 school boards in Ontario and in most cases there were elementary and secondary school boards independent of one another. With the enlargement of 1969, the boards of education comprised a secondary panel, which represented all ratepayers in the area of jurisdiction, and an elementary panel comprising only public school ratepayers. So in fact, the political representation, the trustees, were different, and because of that, the financial statements were different.

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What we were proposing in this submission was that where a separate school extension had occurred so that in fact the ratepayers, and therefore the trustees and administration of the secondary and elementary panels, represented the same interests, we intended to change the legislation so that the reporting of the financial information of the board would be on a one-panel basis. In other words, there would no longer be a distinction between an elementary and a secondary mill rate. We considered that a matter of simplification. What existed as two panels was, in great part, a holdover from the time when those two panels represented different interests, different groups of ratepayers.

The questions on that matter focused for the most part on the definition of exactly what that meant. It was concerned with issues related to whether that would create a change in the grants payable to the board, to which the answer was no. Did it mean that the differential ceilings, that difference between elementary and secondary pupils, would cease to exist? The answer was no. In and of itself, it simply refers to the fact that the reporting of the financial information, the

revenue statements, the estimate statements, will occur in one document, one exercise, for the board.

The third issue is the boundary issue. The presentation at the briefing was done by Alan Bowers of the legislation branch. I am familiar with the issue; I am certainly not as familiar with it as Mr Bowers is. It was the most detailed of the presentations, but I will review it, at least in general terms. I am willing, again, to provide more detailed information in the future.

The issue relating to boundaries—and it was the subject of one of the recommendations in the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education—has to do with the structure of the separate school system, wherein the establishment of separate school zones or doilies, as they have become known, three-mile circles around areas in which there were five separate school supporters, created a situation in which, within county areas, there would be areas that were serviced by separate school boards and other areas that fell between the doilies that were not serviced by the separate school board, as the first problem.

The second problem created was that often the separate school zone passed beyond county boundaries, so you would have the Brant County Roman Catholic Separate School Board having an area within the regional municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk. It was responsible for the education of those pupils; the ratepayers there would be supporters of it. These were small intrusions, because the circle itself would centre in Brant, but simply by drawing the three-mile circle, one had cut into the area of Haldimand-Norfolk. These existed in various areas across the province.

The intent of the legislation was to square off those boundaries so that the separate school board's area of jurisdiction would become the county, thereby making it coterminous with the public school board. The areas of jurisdiction would become the same. The second major issue would be filling in the gaps so that the area of jurisdiction of the board included all the area within the particular county and not simply those areas in which the zones had been created.

There were a lot of questions on the issue. Again, I would characterize them as having mostly to do with clarification. There were concerns about definition of how common these zones were. Would they involve the displacement of large numbers of pupils, a large amount of assessments? The answer was no, because

they are generally small intrusions, small areas that go beyond county boundaries.

Concern was expressed about the interrelationship of the boundary change with the proposed pooling legislation, to which the response was that for the most part, although there is a direct relationship between them, the impact of the two together is not expected to be significant because the zones only exist in the townships. Within the urban areas, the towns and the cities, the zones do not exist; the area of jurisdiction of the board is the entire urban area. The large part of the commercial-industrial development is within the urban areas and therefore not affected by any changes to area of jurisdiction.

In brief, I think that summarizes my memory of those discussions. I do want to reiterate that in preparing our presentation on Monday we attempted to focus on the broad scope of issues related to the financing of education. It had not occurred to us to bring these particular issues forward. That may have been a mistake, we could have structured it differently, and if it has caused some concern, I apologize.

Mr Jackson: It is admirable that you wish to share some of the responsibility. That is a credit to you as an employee of the government, but it was clearly a decision made elsewhere. So although I accept your apology, I do believe you were just presenting that which you were called upon to present.

My only question, Madam Minister—Madam Chairman—God, I want to make you a minister.

The Chairman: Thank you. I am glad somebody does.

Mr Jackson: That is so you—I will leave that alone. We do need more women in the cabinet; I would agree with that.

My question simply is, when were the stakeholders invited, to your knowledge?

Mr Lenglet: I believe they were invited the week prior.

Mr Jackson: Okay. I appreciate this briefing and the statement of apology, but my comment still stands for the record and I would ask the chairman to continue to pursue those matters.

Mr Brumer: I think to characterize the discussions yesterday in terms of a briefing for stakeholders along the lines we would do, let's say, when some major policy announcement has taken place and we bring everybody together and we have handouts and details and information is a little erroneous. It is not a briefing in that context

and to characterize it as such is misleading, I think.

It is more in terms of a consultative process before we put the final preparations on a policy paper and the legislative material that we are putting together that will eventually go before cabinet and then, where legislative matters are concerned, it will be brought before the House and the committees that would deal with that issue at that time. It was not a sort of formal briefing or an announcement of information that we were not prepared to provide.

The Chairman: I appreciate that clarification. We are going to try to obtain the Instant Hansard before we go to Kingston next week. If that is made available, we will try to have enough copies for the members so that at least we can go over the comments that were made today. From that, perhaps members can formulate whether they do require a fuller briefing. I believe Mr Brumer has said that could be arranged for some

time during our travels; possibly the morning after we get to Sudbury, if necessary. I am sorry you will not be with us for that particular leg of our travel, Mr Jackson, but perhaps if you did have any questions you could pass them on to Mr Villeneuve and he could obtain answers for you.

I thank the ministry representatives for trying to solve this dilemma and for Mr Lenglet's presentation today. Brief though it may have been, at least it gave us some idea of the process and what was discussed. I will again fulfil my undertaking to discuss this with the minister in fuller detail so that we can ensure that the committee is kept fully abreast of details that are affecting education, particularly education financing.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday morning in Kingston, at the Ramada Inn.

The committee adjourned at 1240.

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Lenglet, Brian, Manager, Policy/Legislation Liaison, School Business and Finance Branch

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 18 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, 18 September 1989

The committee met at 1006 in the St Laurent Room, Ramada Inn, Kingston, Ontario.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: I would like to open up this session of the select committee on education as we begin our travels across Ontario in our public hearings to look at the financing of education. We are going to be considering the future of education financing specifically related to elementary and secondary education and again relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

We are delighted to be in Kingston as the first leg of our travels. In fact, you provide an absolutely gorgeous view. The only problem will be keeping our minds on the matter at hand. We very much look forward to having input from the people of Kingston.

Our first presentation this morning will be from representatives of the county of Frontenac. If you would be seated and then identify yourselves for the purpose of Hansard; begin whenever you wish. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, and we hope you will leave a few minutes of that 30 minutes for questions from the members. Please begin whenever you are ready.

COUNTY OF FRONTENAC

Mr Silver: My name is Steven Silver. I am chief administrative officer for the county of Frontenac. I have with me Peter Hennessy, who is acting as an advisor and consultant for the county and will be making the presentation on our behalf this morning.

Mr Hennessy: Let me just say by way of preliminary comment that it was a pleasant and surprising discovery that you have come to Kingston to hear views from various people. I mention that because there was really very little publicity of your impending arrival. Either your normal publicity program broke down in reference to Kingston or else you are travelling in semi-secrecy. I am not sure which.

The Chairman: Maybe I should clarify for the committee and the presenters that we did do province-wide advertising at the end of June. It appeared in every daily in Ontario. Mind you,

being so close to the summer months, it is quite possible that it was not picked up, but I can assure you that we did advertise in the Kingston and area papers. So I am very glad that you heard via the grapevine that our committee was sitting if you did not catch that advertising.

Mr Hennessy: Let me read our brief. It opens with a general analysis of the situation in Frontenac county from our standpoint.

By almost any measure or definition, Frontenac county is an ordinary county among the counties of Ontario. It has a population of about 115,000, with the majority residing in one urban concentration and the remainder scattered through the towns, villages and countryside roads of the hinterland. It is roughly comparable in its demography and economic profile with Hastings, Peterborough, Lambton, Brant and probably some others.

The city of Kingston and Kingston township encompass most of the industrial and commercial activity of the county. A large share of the assessment is accounted for by three companies, Alcan, Northern Telecom and Du Pont Canada, with the remainder spread among 80 or more small enterprises, the majority of which employ fewer than 25 persons.

Growth has been modest over the past generation, with the result that the residential assessment is 72 per cent of the equalized total assessment, and that is almost exactly the same percentage as the average for all the counties of Ontario. The large cities—Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, for example—from the standpoint of a residential property taxpayer, have a much more favourable balance of residential to commercial assessment.

In at least two respects, however, Frontenac county is not ordinary. First, the county seat, Kingston, with a population of some 57,000, is what Arthur Lower called a subcapital. In addition to the needs of the county, the city and its environs have acquired institutions and services, some dating back more than 150 years, which serve regional, provincial and national needs. That is the explanation of the term "subcapital" in its brief description of Kingston.

It is the subcapital for the Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. It serves the same function for the national corrections ser-

vice. Indeed, it is the leading centre in all of Canada in terms of prisons, correctional staff training and correctional service administration. It possesses a national defence base and it is home to the oldest military college in Canada. Kingston shares its land with Queen's University, now the city's largest employer and in some respects a world-class institution. Not least, the city contains a health service complex that serves all of eastern Ontario.

In addition to the unique subcapital function of the county seat, Frontenac county presents sharp contrasts in personal income that may be unique among the counties, but which certainly influence and confound municipal policy to a great extent. In 1986, the average family income in Palmerston township, at the north end of the county, was \$19,215 per year—that is family income—while that of suburban Kingston township was \$45,067 in 1986. It really is astounding that such variance in living standards can exist in one county.

In these circumstances, the effect of the education property tax is startlingly different from one location to another. An education tax of, say, \$1,000 may seem a tolerable burden to a suburban or city family with an income of \$60,000 or more, but with no commensurate change in the education tax for families in the townships, the burden is severe. Typical northern property owners are likely to be levied from \$500 to \$800 per year for the support of education, when in relation to a prosperous city family, their levy should in all fairness be much less. I make that statement based upon the comparison of the family income figures which I gave a moment ago. In these contrasting circumstances, social justice has become the issue surrounding school taxes.

A majority of the members of the Frontenac County Board of Education are part of the subcapital culture. That, we think, is an important point to make. That is by virtue of the representation system of the board. They and their senior officials openly boast of the sophistication of their staff, their programs and their services. They claim they have built up a school system resembling the big systems in Ottawa and Toronto simply in response to the demands of their constituents.

In the outcome, the Frontenac County Board of Education has ratios and costs that are seriously out of line with the norm for other counties. The ratio of pupils to nonteaching staff in 1987 was 29.4 to 1 while that of the average of the counties of Hastings, Niagara South, Peter-

borough and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry was 35.4 to 1. Those four counties were not chosen for any particular reason except that they are roughly comparable with Frontenac county in the way they are structured and in the economics and demography of their people. The Frontenac board's ratio of pupils to elementary teachers in the same year, that is 1987, was 15 to 1 while the average ratio of the four aforementioned counties was 17.7 to 1.

These are very costly differences, which can be traced, in our view at any rate, to the subcapital mentality of the trustees, or certainly of many of the trustees. Caught in the aftermath of this mentality, the rural and northern municipalities of Frontenac county can only squirm and try to adjust. In 1989, public school taxes increased by as little as 9.8 per cent in Kingston township, if you call that little, where there is to be found the greatest ability to pay, to as much as 17 per cent in Oso township, with a much lesser ability to pay.

We appreciate that there are complicated details of assessment and equalization of assessment and mill rate formulae in these differences. Our point is that there is a popular perception of gross injustice. It has now reached the stage in Frontenac county where it can be claimed that sound municipal planning has been jeopardized by school taxes. Municipal councils and officials report that they cannot plan for improved roads, fire protection or waste disposal because of the fact that they are forced to incorporate such large increases in school taxes into their tax bills each year that they dare not levy improvement taxes for other municipal services.

To illustrate the point, the municipal tax increase, excluding education, for those same two townships in 1989 was 4.8 per cent for Kingston township and 7.5 per cent for Oso township. There again, people who live in these townships look at the differences in the rate of increase for all other municipal services and education and they cannot understand.

Another emerging trend which has an apparent relationship to school taxes is the search for new assessment and therefore a stronger tax base in the rural townships. Those within commuting distance of Kingston tend to favour easy severances for building lots. By this means they gain additional assessment much faster than by the much more cumbersome route of plans of subdivision. In the process, however, they lose as much or more as they gain. The rural scene is being transformed rapidly into a dreary succession of houses facing the traffic arteries. The

families in these houses demand expensive services, including education. The townships, with their improved assessments, are faced with unexpectedly steep increases in education taxes. In the outcome, municipal politicians wonder whether they and their constituencies are worse off than before.

1020

That is our general analysis of the situation. We conclude with a few very brief remarks that might be called recommendations.

The province of Ontario has tried with little success over the past 20 years to control the cost of education. In the early days of the county system there were spending ceilings assigned to each board, beyond which the boards were penalized. Some of you may remember the day, as I certainly do, when some of the more pretentious and presumptuous boards, if those are appropriate adjectives, were indeed penalized for spending beyond the ceilings. Grants were withheld by some sort of formula. I have forgotten what it was, but the penalty was rough.

In response to pressure from the rich boards—at least I can find no other explanation for the change—the spending ceilings were banned in the late 1970s in favour of grant ceilings whereby a school board may spend what the traffic will stand, but will receive provincial grant support at the determined rate only up to a specified ceiling. Beyond the ceiling, the money officially budgeted by the school board must be raised from the local property owners.

It seems clear to Frontenac county ratepayers that this system of control has broken down. The Frontenac County Board of Education has moved in its spending so far beyond the grant ceilings that a citizens' petition is now in process demanding that the board reduce its budget by 10 per cent as a first step in getting into line in its spending with the average county system in Ontario. I may say in passing, based on information I have picked up this past weekend, that that petition has accumulated well over 3,000 signatures.

The average amount spent over the grant ceiling for each elementary pupil in all the counties of Ontario was \$369 in 1987. The Frontenac county board was an astonishing \$804 in spending per elementary pupil over the grant ceiling in 1987. For each secondary pupil, this board was \$948 over the ceiling per pupil against an average for all the counties of \$728 over the ceiling. Frontenac board's response to the petition to date has been that it is locked into a

level of expenses mandated by the province and by their own collective agreements.

We are not optimistic that the Frontenac board of education will modify its spending and taxing patterns without a strong provincial inducement in that direction. Though we hesitate to recommend a return to the concept of a spending ceiling, we believe that the time has come for stronger provincial management of school board budgets. An alternative to the spending ceiling might be more specific provincial guidelines regarding pupil-staff ratios.

We are not enthusiastic about transferring education costs to the income tax. First, it would bring about a sharp rise in income tax. Second, such an action would lead to overwhelming pressure to grant tax credits to certain classes of persons, which would only make more severe the income tax on those without any credit status. Third and most important, paying for education with the income tax without structural changes in the school system could drive the cost of education to unheard-of levels.

We recommend that the province adopt a schedule of dates for the assumption of an increasing responsibility for funding public education out of legislative grants, moving from 60 per cent immediately to an upper limit of 75 per cent within 10 years. Of course, we are speaking about a generalized level of support for the entire province when we use those figures, rather than for any specific jurisdiction. To ensure financial feasibility, we recommend that the province establish a central quasi-judicial mechanism for determining teachers' salaries and benefits. This would confine the scope of local collective bargaining in education to working conditions. We note that earlier provincial studies of teacher-board relationships and the funding of public education have warned of the dangers of unlimited bargaining in education at the local level. Those warnings were manifestly correct but have remained unheeded.

In conclusion, we come before your committee with a feeling of great distress. We earnestly hope that your recommendations will lead to action in favour of the ratepayers of Frontenac county. Respectfully submitted.

The Chairman: Thank you, Professor Hennessy, for your very sensitive brief. It has been quite informative. I think we have about 10 minutes or so to open it up for questions from members.

Mr Mahoney: Your comments on page 6 of your brief really address the issue of local autonomy and accountability. If we were in

essence to support a concept of a global cut in a certain level of government to have duly elected representatives, and then come in and virtually take over, the unsaid statement in your brief is that you would really seem to favour the elimination of elected officials at the school board level, or am I reading between the lines too much?

Mr Hennessy: Certainly, as you have said yourself, Mr Mahoney, it is not in the lines and I do not think it is between the lines. Speaking for myself alone, it is not between the lines.

As to that observation about the peril in which local government would find itself if the government were to adopt these recommendations, and there is indeed a peril implied, our response to that, and you may hear much more about this during the course of the day, would be that county boards of education are handmaidens of the Ministry of Education in any case. There is a charade of self-government. I know the Education Act, in its permissive or "may" section, provides for lots of possibilities for boards of education, but when all is said and done the agenda is determined in Toronto. Therefore, if the government were to go an extra step and get involved in more stringent guidelines with respect to budget staffing practices in particular, which constitute the core of any education budget, as you know, it would not change anything very much, it seems to me.

Mr Mahoney: Every three years now in the province we have municipal elections and I have been involved in a few of those over my time. Just as an example, if you go to an all-candidates meeting in virtually any community in the province, the questions go to the mayoralty candidates first, to the council candidates second, and if there is any time left, they go to the trustees, yet they generally represent between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of the budget that is being spent.

Would you think it would be more helpful if there were some way to heighten the impact of electing trustees, even if it were a different date, something that would bring to the front the issue of these people being democratically elected and responsible to answer the questions you raise? This is notwithstanding the fact that their hands are tied to a certain degree because of their labour costs and their program costs; there still is some flexibility. As you pointed out, going over the ceilings or what we refer to as approved costs then falls on the local taxpayer. Do you think it is valid that there is not enough attention paid to trustee elections?

Mr Hennessy: Yes, I do.

Mr Mahoney: Do you have any ideas on how we would change that? Separate tax bills?

Mr Hennessy: From my observations of other school systems that I might describe as more democratic, I have preferred for years the idea of locally elected school councils within a cluster of schools. Do you know what I mean by that?

Mr Mahoney: A family of schools?

Mr Hennessy: Yes, headed by a high school. The idea of an elected council at the cluster level makes much more sense to me, both in terms of developing programs that are suitable to the community and in terms of achieving a democratic responsiveness, to which you have referred. A set of counties might become an administrative district for a set of schools. That is the structural change I thought would be helpful. The petition we are conducting now—this is not a county petition but there is a committee and I happen to be involved in the work of the committee that is conducting this petition—would not exist if the Frontenac County Board of Education had a democratic capability built into it somehow.

Mr Mahoney: That is interesting. Thanks very much.

1030

Mr Villeneuve: On page 7, you mention that the grants should move from 60 per cent immediately to an upper limit of 75 per cent. You must be making a better deal than most people across Ontario because most of these boards, as we understand them, are not funded anywhere close to 60 per cent. We always have the argument of approved expenditures and real expenditures. Could you address that a bit?

Also, if the province has very stringent judicial powers for such things as teacher's salaries, etc., what would the jurisdiction be of the local boards at that time? Would they continue to have the powers to increase or to support willy-nilly the real costs of operating their boards? I have some problems here in trying to ascertain exactly what you are saying, sir.

Mr Hennessy: To go back to the beginning of your question as I understand it—you can correct me if I am wrong—the province is now funding approximately 55 per cent or 56 per cent.

Mr Villeneuve: I think it is closer to 42 per cent.

Mr Jackson: In your jurisdiction?

Mr Hennessy: No, across the province. The Premier (Mr Peterson) boasted in the last election

that the province of Ontario is funding education to the tune of, I believe—the figure I remember, without having it written down anywhere, is 55 per cent.

Mr Mahoney: Of approved costs; that is correct.

Mr Hennessy: Yes.

Mr Jackson: That includes the teachers' pension contribution, so it is really a rather skewed figure.

Mr Hennessy: In any case, whatever it includes, this recommendation suggests that the overall, province-wide level of support be moved with all deliberate speed to 60 per cent, varying tremendously from county to county, where Prescott and Russell might get 85—that is what that means—and moving to 75 per cent. This has been kicked around for years and years. As you know, it is an election thing that goes on time after time.

As for the consequences of taking collective bargaining out of the local jurisdiction and establishing a quasi-judicial body, some sort of tribunal with an arm's-length relationship to the Legislature and with a degree of administrative-judicial power, that is not a new idea at all. That sort of thing has been tried and is done in various parts of the world, and done more or less successfully, in determining the salaries and benefits of public servants, including teachers.

It simply transfers the bargaining process to a different level and puts it into a different framework or context. It is not bargaining in the General Motors sense any more when you go to that kind of mechanism, but it certainly has a potential for success and would not necessarily, nor even desirably, in my opinion, reduce teachers' salaries. In other words, that is not one of the kicking boys of our brief. We are not out to bash teachers. We just understand this to be the central fact in the budget problem in Frontenac county and generally across the province and somebody had better start addressing that problem.

Mr Villeneuve: We in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry have very much the same problem as you have here, with a large concentration of population at the southern extremity in the city of Cornwall and then rather sparsely populated areas outside. We have seen a 17 per cent increase in the cost of education to our taxpayers and a cutback of services, particularly in the rural areas, as you have had in Oso township. It certainly makes for a very difficult situation

when you have that type of demography within the structure of the board.

I gather then you still say the cost of education should be real estate based.

Mr Hennessy: I would like to encourage my colleague Steven Silver to speak to this. This really does come to the question of what municipal government is all about, and it does come to the history of the province and some very cherished traditions. Do you want to speak to that at all, Steve?

Mr Silver: Of course, I am not an elected politician, but I find that the current system is a definite burden to the taxpayers. I think what we were trying to get at in our brief is, yes, keep some real estate base but increase the portion that the province is paying so that we can hold the level or the certain percentage that the residents are now paying.

Going back to Mr Mahoney's comment, I have been a municipal clerk for 15 years and I know there were certain elections where it was hard to find people to run for school board trustee. Quite often, to the last minute on nomination day, that was vacant, but we have seen a big turnaround here in Frontenac county. That was 10 years ago. Five years ago, there were six people running in a small township for one position and the questions were not directed at the local officials; the questions from the audience, from the floor, were directed at the public trustees. It is a large concern in this area.

The Chairman: We have approximately two minutes left in the presentation time and we have Mr Kozyra, Mr Jackson and Mr Keyes, so perhaps I could ask you to keep your questions brief.

Mr Kozyra: I had two; I will just make it one question. Mr Hennessy, first of all, it is good to see you. It was 34 years ago when you last taught me grade 9 French at Port Arthur Collegiate Institute.

Mr Mahoney: How many times did you have to teach it to him?

Mr Kozyra: It was not enough.

My question relates to a comment on page 7 on the recommendation to increase the legislative grants to 75 per cent. As I understand it, you recommend that along with stronger provincial management. My thinking would be that the less of a percentage you have on municipal school boards and so on, the greater the tendency may be to spend over the ceiling and so on. Their overall burden might shrink and therefore the penalty or the effects of overspending would be lessened. Is

that part of the reason you advocate stronger provincial management and control of this?

Mr Hennessy: Yes, certainly, Taras. You could plot the thing on a graph line very simply. The greater the provincial responsibility financially for the funding of education, necessarily the greater the provincial management of the school system. How can it be otherwise?

The Chairman: Mr Jackson has waived his question in the interest of time.

Mr Keyes: Peter, is the whole issue not that what you are seeking is accountability of school boards for their expenditures? I think it has already been alluded to that if we try to increase the expenditure level from the province, there will be even that much less accountability by school boards. Do we not have to work on methods of making school trustees be seen in the eyes of the public to be more accountable than they are?

I do not know whether you have commented on this issue of separate tax bills. That has always been a red herring to some people. Others think that would tend to focus more attention on the school boards themselves and what they are spending. So you might make a comment on that.

Second, if you are going to expect the province to pay more of the total cost, and again you did not clarify if that was total cost or approved cost, then it is going to have to seek an avenue for it. Would you favour the province taking over and collecting all of the commercial and industrial assessment, as an example, as they do in some provinces, in order to pay back and still leave something on the property tax but somewhat reduced, using commercial and industrial assessment as the source of additional moneys? I will leave you with two there.

Mr Hennessy: Let me just say on the first point, Ken, that the idea of separate tax bills for school boards is not a bad one, but to me, judging from our experience in this county at any rate, it would be a very negligible influence on the behaviour of the board. They are separately and clearly enough noted on the tax bills that nearly everybody is aware. Certainly, I have dealt with many hundreds of people face to face on this other operation we are conducting here in the county at the present time, and they are all aware of that separate education item on the bill. Maybe Steven would like to comment on the second point you raised.

Mr Silver: I think that idea of looking at the commercial and industrial sector is a good one. On the first point, there was a movement in the

county where the school boards said, "We will collect our own taxes," but once the townships got looking at that, it was going to cost them money for the school board to do that. That has been considered.

I know some municipalities are saying that their first levy or first bill is for municipal purposes and the second bill is for education purposes, and the residents have a chance to see what exactly they are paying in education taxes. Obviously, it has not had an effect on the board.

1040

Mr Keyes: Just as a follow-up, how many townships of the 20 that I believe you have in the county now issue two tax bills so that they are seen to be split that way, even though it is not a total and equitable split? How many do that?

Mr Silver: There are 15 townships in the county and I would say 90 per cent of them have at least two instalments. Now the majority have three instalments.

Mr Jackson: The instalments are payment patterned, but I think the question was whether or not they were designated on the actual computer bill to show that which is an education levy and that which is a municipal bill. Do we know if that is done as a custom or rule?

Mr Silver: Yes, that is done.

Mr Jackson: In all instances?

Mr Silver: That is done in all instances. The county receives part of the tax bill as well. It shows you which part is your county, which is your local and which is your education tax.

Mr Jackson: So that is what you meant by three instalments. Thank you; now I understand.

The Chairman: Thank you Professor Hennessy and Mr Silver for your presentation today. As I mentioned at the beginning, it is very informative.

PETERBOROUGH-VICTORIA-
NORTHUMBERLAND AND NEWCASTLE
ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE
SCHOOL BOARD

The Chairman: The next delegation will be from the Peterborough-Victoria-Northumberland and Newcastle Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Perhaps you could come forward please. If you would like to be seated, we have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and hopefully that will include a few minutes for questions because members are very interested in getting some of the details of any proposals you may make. Please begin whenever you are ready

and perhaps you would just start by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr Roach: I am Peter Roach. I am the director of education with—I will say it once—the Peterborough-Victoria-Northumberland and Newcastle Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I have with me our planning and assessment supervisor, Ken Kary. I do not want to say Ken Keyes, but it is very close to being that.

Mr Keyes: A fine chap.

Mr Roach: Right.

First an apology to you, Madam Chairman, that we have you down as Mr Chairman. I lay that blame to our previous chairperson, Peggy Mahon, who refused to be called Madam Chairperson. She wanted to be called the chairman of the board, so I come with some hangups on these things. No offence, please.

The Chairman: I would only be offended if once you came you did not recognize that I was a madam instead of a mister.

Mr Roach: You are identified very easily.

Our brief is not as complex as the last one. As a separate school board we do not have enough time to prepare these, so I will go with ours the way it is. We would like to thank you, your committee members and through you the government of Ontario for the opportunity to share with you our thoughts on the very crucial issue of funding education in the province.

As the title of our board indicates, it covers an extremely wide geographical area of some 4,300 square miles. As you travelled from Toronto to Kingston, you were travelling approximately 70 miles of that distance from Oshawa to Trenton, which for educational purposes for separate school ratepayers is under my board's jurisdiction. Much of the area through which you travelled is one of the fastest growth areas in the province. I would like to share with you some enrolment data for the period 1979 to 1989. I might jokingly suggest that you might want to give us the next 10-year projections.

On the back page, if I may refer to that, we are broken into four areas geographically: Peterborough county, the city of Peterborough, Northumberland and Newcastle, and Victoria county. You can see by that that in the last five years the board has grown significantly. In those 10 years, the county of Peterborough has not grown to any degree, at 13 per cent. The city is at 72 per cent. Northumberland and Newcastle is at 107 per cent. Victoria county is at 83 per cent.

We have approximately 850 more students today than we had in June, which is an increase of approximately 10 per cent, so my board does need some attention, like all boards in the province. We see that growth continuing even at a quicker pace in the near future because of the Courtice-Bowmanville-Newcastle-Port Hope-Cobourg total area. I do not believe it would be prudent to dwell on the uniqueness of our board with respect to geography, except to state that, due to the economies of scale where my board provides education for approximately 10,000 students, three coterminous boards provide education for approximately 46,000 students.

I propose to address the issue of educational finance under the headings of accountability, adequacy and equity.

Accountability: It is the philosophy and firm conviction of the trustees of my board that they are held accountable for providing students entrusted to their care with the best possible educational programs and environment, programs and environments equal to those provided in the excellent public school systems today. I use the word "public" in contrast to "separate," fully appreciating that both systems are publicly funded.

Without equal or greater funding in the shorter run, the trustees of the separate school board cannot fulfil their mandate. I say "greater funding in the shorter run" in order to meet demands that have not been met over the past years and in particular in the area of facilities.

The Ministry of Education in this province charges separate school boards with the same mandate as that of the boards of education. We must provide education to the public that is equally watchful of our ability to deliver the product. When I mention the public school boards, I am in no way believing or saying they are adequately funded either, but I believe we are funded to a lesser degree than they at this moment.

Equality: A fundamental imbalance exists with respect to the access that separate school boards have to local sources of taxation. In order to address this issue with some measure of relevance, it is appropriate to return to the basic principles of taxation and of democracy. The two are inherently linked, since it is through the democratic tradition that governments have been given the power to tax, for which they must be held accountable. In a democratic society, those who govern must be aware of their responsibilities with respect to those whom they represent.

The manner in which a tax is collected and expended must therefore be devised with some care. This will ensure that those who pay the tax continue to support it in the belief and trust that it is serving their purposes.

The most basic principle of taxation is the equal treatment of equals. The words speak for themselves. All taxation measures must respect this basic premise. It is the cornerstone of our belief in the entire tradition of public funding.

At present, the separate school system is unfairly funded. We must have access to our share of commercial and business assessment generated in our communities—or in the province at large, if you wish to go on a larger basis. The wealth has been created in true commonwealth fashion by the entire community. These resources must be properly divided among those who contributed to it.

I do not wish to belabour the points which have undoubtedly crossed your desks on numerous occasions, but we are all aware of the mechanisms by which the public system can automatically pick up that residential assessment which separate school boards must strive to maintain. These of course are a concern to us as well. To give you a brief example: If my family lived in my father's house for 100 years and it was transferred to me, the assessment goes to the public school board immediately unless I so indicate I wish to be a separate school supporter.

It is this board's position that fairness and equality must be inherent in the funding of education. The lack of access to these sources of funding, our share of both residential and the nonprivate commercial assessment, is crucial to the ability of this board to deliver quality education in a quality environment.

The recent provincial initiative in assuring adequate sharing of the assessment base to allow greater separate school autonomy is to be applauded and encouraged.

Adequacy: The adequacy issue is perhaps the most important, and it stems in large part from the accountability and equity issues previously addressed. Because the separate school board is accountable to its students, parents and ratepayers as well as to society in general, it must have fair and equal access to the resources in order to carry out the mandate.

Adequacy can best be illustrated by example. It is recognized that while capital and operating costs can be played off against one another, this board's most pressing need is in capital financing. We simply do not have the resources to

properly accommodate the students who are entering our system.

While I do not wish to delve into a great deal of statistical material, some background on the present overall situation and on some impending crises is necessary.

As of September 1989 our enrolment has grown to 9,800 students. It is in excess of that and the figures do change daily. This is an increase of 850 students over last year. I think if you check on the back page it shows 800. It is also equivalent to two good-sized elementary schools.

The board has 121 portables at its 30 schools. This is a 20 per cent increase over the 1988-89 school year and represents, in capacity terms, over 4,200 students, or 43 per cent of our total accommodation space. I am sure that is no shock to you as you come from many of the growth areas.

While the value of portables is well known and appreciated, the number of students this board is accommodating in portable structures is enough to fill 10 schools. The limited autonomy of funds in terms of our ability to adequately supplement the ministry's capital grants with our own local share of the capital cost of our schools is one key point. More important is our ability to bridge finance those projects that require initial outlays of funds in order to realize appropriate and timely school openings.

At the moment, the board is attempting to build a new secondary school in Peterborough: St Peter's High School. We will not receive any funding until 1991 and 1992. Presently, approximately 1,150 students are housed in a 650-pupil accommodation sitting on one acre of land, and that has created extensive problems. My board is attempting to move that project ahead a bit, but the bridge financing cost is \$500,000, which in my board is a real hardship to raise from taxpayers.

We are also trying to build two elementary schools. One year ago today we opened a new elementary school in Courtice, outside of Oshawa. It presently has 10 portables. If we do not open by this time next year we will have 20 portables. We are in the same situation in Peterborough and in Cobourg. My board is restricted in what it can do on those issues.

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A means of ensuring that adequate capital is available to respond to both the new capital requirements of the board, as well as to address a number of inadequacies in our present structures, is urgently needed. Access to a greater assess-

ment base and other innovative funding mechanisms are vital in addressing these needs.

I felt before I started I could have saved you a lot of time in listening, although I probably have read it too fast so I have too many questions coming to me now. But the way I see it, my board cannot fulfil its mandate in fairness to students with the funding we have at the present moment. That is as simple as our driving here this morning. We cannot continue to provide. We are very happy to discuss our programs with you. We are probably one of the key boards in Ontario in trying to integrate our students who are identified as exceptional students, and most of you understand the cost of that. My board believes that if it is going to do its mandate, it looks out for the students who are there.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that my board and all other separate school boards in general will not continue to operate effectively without being treated as equal partners in education.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Roach. I am pleased you have left about 15 minutes for questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation. I am a Peterborough boy. I remember distinctly the trips in with my kids, fellow students who were going to St Pete's when I was going to Adam Scott. I understand the incredible geography that you represent; it is really quite phenomenal.

I wanted to ask you a couple of questions; one is about lot levies. You have mentioned you have this huge portable problem and you made no comment about the legislation which is now before committee at this stage, around lot levies and what impact you think that will have on your capacity to meet your new student needs.

Mr Roach: As a separate school administrator for a long time, I can say we have been privileged to have a high rate of grant and a low rate of requisition from our communities. My good friends in coterminous boards take much more abuse than we do on that point. But since we have come to a place where the province has not seen fit to raise ceilings sufficiently for us to keep operating that way, then we have to have some change.

I listened to the last presentation. I could have done more in Toronto as regards taking abuse—I will use that word again; I like it better because then the community provides good programs without being abused for it.

Lot levies are certainly a source of funding. We would have a number of communities that have extensive building activity, such as the area

we call the Lakeshore—Courtice, Bowmanville and so on. We will certainly go for lot levies, as I am sure my coterminous boards will. It will provide some funds for immediate projects. It is certainly another source of funding. We would not resist it.

I do not hold it as the only method of collecting; I probably would not have proposed it. I think it is going to cause some problems for young couples or people who are buying homes who will say, "This is another \$5,000 or \$10,000 added to that." That is the negative part of it that I see. But it is a source of revenue, and it would provide funds for us.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It will not affect the 121 portables that you have now, but in growth areas you think it will go some way to meeting your needs.

Mr Roach: I will just expand on that. As well as those portables, we have a number of buildings that do not have gymnasiums or library facilities; they were built in the days when those were not there. We have a major facility problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Your answer to that question leads me to my second question, which has to do with overceiling expenditures. As you say, the previous board talked about some of its figures on that. What I guess I am looking for is some comments around accountability and ceilings, because when we start to try to lay blame in terms of our boards being too extravagant locally, or if the ministry is not giving enough money and the ceilings are unrealistic, there is a real problem at the moment because they are unilaterally imposed.

I wonder if you as a board have thought about a new methodology for establishing ceilings which would involve the boards more than the present approach does.

Mr Roach: First of all, I think any of us would have to admit that the level of ceiling is not appropriate today. I believe that most boards in my area are acting in an accountable fashion.

The mandate put on the school today is to educate all the pupils who come. There is a great difference between that expectation and the amount of money provided to produce the kinds of programs, the teacher training, small rooms and other things that go with that today.

I am not blaming the boards. I do not think we can get the boards to reduce their spending significantly. The last gentleman spoke about the salaries of personnel; that is true. But we have asked our teachers to become more educated, and

more education requires a greater reimbursement.

It is a dilemma. I do not think it is going to be brought down very much. It is a matter of looking at what the province has asked us to do and at the kinds of funds it takes to do that.

That is probably a long answer, but I think the ceilings are not responsible numbers today.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not disagree with that at all. I guess I am just looking for some other methodology for coming up with ceilings than what we have at the moment, which I do not think is very helpful to a local board trying to explain to its taxpayers why it is going overceiling as much as it is, if the boards are not more involved in the process of establishing those ceilings in the first place.

The final thing is a short question which has to do with your concern around the automatic pickup by the public boards of properties such as the one from your own family example that you put forward. The presumption behind that, I presume, is that the public board has to provide access to all who come to it and that, as you put it, the community-shared base to that is, "From all, for all who wish to come," whereas the separate boards have the right to exclude and therefore must show why it is that exclusivity is being met in the particular case. How would you deal with that argument for that presumption of things therefore going to the public board in the first place?

Mr Roach: Right now I can deal much better with the secondary level, of course, because we all have access to the secondary level. I do not think that is a good point necessarily, but we do have that.

I understand that. You are making a good point. It is difficult to do. I guess if it were a separate school property, it might remain as that until somebody requested it not to be a separate school property. It is not. I take your point as being accurate.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Roach, I have some difficulty with your page 3. I see that you finally do acknowledge some initiative and say that it is to be applauded and encouraged. I felt that the 1989-90 budget of this province did attend to much that you have put in paragraphs 2 and 3 on that page.

I would like you to be clearer on what you feel is incomplete in the initiatives the province has taken regarding the sharing of commercial and

industrial assessment in any given jurisdiction in the province.

I have had much more—what should I say?—feedback or letters crossing my desk on the other side of this issue than on this side of the issue. I guess what I would like you to do is try to complete the picture for me of what is incomplete.

Mr Roach: Being on the academic side, I do not spend all my time—and nobody does—on the financial aspects of the boards. We probably should spend more time. But if you are referring to the sharing of the assessment over a six-year period, one sixth each year, I think that concept is a very worthy one. I do not know where my board is going to be six years from now with the delay in that coming in.

I cannot overstress my board's dilemma at the present moment. I think that kind of funding will assist. But I also understand the public school boards' concern about that. I do not believe the public schools are overfunded, even with that kind of assessment base. I guess what I look at there is that it is a little easier for residential people when you have a lot of commercial assessment. That may be one thing that the public boards have at this moment.

When we go over our ceilings, we go from approximately 22 per cent to 100 per cent: five times. When the Peterborough county board goes over its ceiling, it doubles it. Until that is corrected, that will be a few years down the road. When that is done, then both systems will come as a team effort and say, "We are still short," because we will be.

Mrs O'Neill: Just for data collection purposes, do you feel the commercial and industrial assessment in your counties is growing at the same rate as your residential or not so?

Mr Roach: Our residential is growing much faster. If I were the Premier, I would have gone for pooling of all assessment in the province, not just poor old Peterborough by itself, or Northumberland, because we have not got it. What is happening is that a lot of people are leaving Toronto and buying homes in Peterborough or Newcastle and bringing no industrial base with them, just residential base.

Mrs O'Neill: I certainly do take very seriously the needs you have in facilities. I think you have expressed that well. You went over rather quickly, however, bridge financing. Have you taken any initiative to build any schools strictly from funds within your own budget or have all of these schools that you have built been on the

grant basis only and the small contribution from the school board?

Mr Roach: Mrs O'Neill, we could never build a school from our own funds. On a \$40-million budget, as we have—

Mrs O'Neill: That is your budget?

Mr Roach: Yes. We have approximately \$500,000 in reserve. If we bridge-finance the buildings we are talking about right now, we are talking about \$1. million. For us to go to our ratepayers with that—which is \$500,000, 100 per cent, almost strictly to a residential assessment base—is criminal.

Mrs O'Neill: I wanted that recorded but I am not sure I wanted the last word.

Mr Roach: Okay. I am sorry. My words are not always good.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much. I have the facts I need. One question too many.

Mr Jackson: I was going to ask you your percentage funding but when you used the 20 per cent figure, I suspect that you are around 80 per cent provincial grant.

Mr Roach: That is as accurate as we can get, which is a good levy.

Mr Jackson: Secondly, in the last capital allocation announced by the ministry, the four-year projection, how did your board fare in that?

Mr Roach: My board fared relatively well. We received \$28 million to do until 1992. We hope to go back this fall again with this year's allocation. That allocation was for an elementary school in Courtice, where we have 10 portables and we will have 20 for next year, one in the city of Peterborough that was originally a three-room school with six portables and nothing in it at all, and a very bad building to begin with.

In the town of Cobourg we are trying to get secondary accommodation, so we received \$2 million for 1992 to renovate Brookside Training School to use as a secondary school. We are into a lot of different projects that are very, very temporary.

Mr Jackson: So that is at the adjusted grant rate.

Mr Roach: Yes. St Peter's High School will take most of it. It is \$15 million towards St Peter's High School.

Mr Jackson: What is your provincial grant rate for capital right at the moment?

Mr Roach: At the moment, that is something we have not had finalized yet, how much the board's contribution towards that will be. In the

past it has been close to 90 per cent. I believe that will not be so for these projects.

Mr Jackson: Have you any idea? Your financial people have not looked at those numbers?

Mr Roach: We do not.

Mr Jackson: Finally, it was announced last week that the ministry is looking at some changes in boundaries and areas of responsibility for separate school boards. Have you had a chance to have that announcement interpreted and what, generally, are your feelings about its implications to your board?

Mr Roach: If this was not a very serious group, I would be a little more at ease and say that we are going to get a new high school in Trenton, Ontario. The separate school board just built one in one of our townships and that is going to be a fair discussion there. Murray township belongs to Northumberland county—Mr O'Neil may not agree with me on this—but the Hastings board built St Paul's Secondary School with its own funds in Murray township. We are going to come out peaceably some day but our board is impacted because we have such a wide territory. We have some on the western side, too, but no schools located there. Trenton will be the biggest problem.

Mr Jackson: Interesting. Thank you for commenting on that.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Roach, for your presentation before our committee today. We shall certainly consider your viewpoints and the information you have provided us with.

Our next delegation will be from the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Good morning. Welcome to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your presentation today. I say that not having read it, so maybe I will regret those words 15 minutes from now. But I am sure you have only kind words for whatever we are doing with education in the province. I am being slightly tongue-in-cheek there. Anyway, welcome to our committee. Please begin by identifying yourself for purposes of Hansard and you may continue whenever you are ready. We have allocated 30 minutes and we are hoping there will be some time during your presentation for questions from members. Please proceed.

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UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT,
DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY

Mrs Ross: Thank you, Madam Chairman. We are represented by, to my left, Deputy Reeve

Carson Elliott of the township of Osnabruck, as well as Deputy Reeve Edward Thompson from the village of Iroquois. I am Carol-Ann Ross, reeve of Charlottenburgh township.

First of all, I would like to thank you, Madam Chairman and committee members, for having this committee as well as receiving this delegation today.

I will go through the preamble of our submission. The accompanying brief to the select committee on education is presented by a committee appointed by the council of the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. This committee was formed to address the concerns of various ratepayers about the rapidly escalating costs of education on the property tax base. The views expressed are taken from submissions made to this committee by individuals, groups and local municipal councils within the United Counties, as well as representatives of the local public and separate school boards.

There is a great concern on the part of the general public about the sudden escalation of property taxes for educational purposes and a further concern that this escalation will continue over future years. With an annual cost-of-living increase of under five per cent, it is difficult for the man on the street to rationalize property tax increases of 17 per cent, more or less, for education purposes. We find that prevailing opinion indicates that the property tax base is no longer an appropriate source of education funding. It would seem that funding of education costs entirely at the provincial level would spread the cost over a much broader tax base and at the same time provide for a more equitable distribution of funds.

Therefore, it is our recommendation that municipalities be relieved of the responsibility of taxation for education purposes.

We realize such a major adjustment would require implementation time and in the interim period it is suggested that provincial funding for education purposes be maintained at a level not lower than 60 per cent, subject to appropriate equalization to maintain equity throughout the province.

Therefore, it is our recommendation that education costs be funded at a minimum of 60 per cent provincial, subject to appropriate equalization to maintain equity throughout the province until 100 per cent provincial funding can be achieved.

There is a consensus among the general public that child care should not be incorporated in the education system and prekindergarten is, in the

main, perceived to be a child care function. These additional children create overcrowding in an already overburdened school system. This has resulted in excess capital expenditures for classroom purposes. The school system should be maintained for educational purposes only.

Therefore, it is our recommendation that prekindergarten programs should be discontinued in view of the extra cost burden they place on an already overburdened system.

Many submissions received by our committee indicated that the present school system in Ontario should be completely reviewed. We have continually added new programs to old systems, to the point that we now have produced excessively costly and unwieldy entities. There are suggestions that we can only afford a single school system. There was also a proposal that the development of one administration system would be able to deal effectively with administrative matters to avoid duplication and overlapping; for example, busing, buildings, etc. This committee feels that this proposal bears consideration as it has merit. While it could not be expected to cut administration costs in half, for instance, it should, by eliminating duplication, be possible to make a considerable saving in administration services.

Under this pooling of administration and other school board services, we would see the development of departments to manage the different groups—public, separate, French, etc. We see such management groups as being able to consider all aspects of the education system in making decisions and thus overcome the divisions between the various boards and also to deal with duplication in the system in an objective manner. This would be a major revamping of the present system and, to be completely objective, we believe the changing needs of today's society and the pressures of rising taxation call for a complete study and review of our education system so that the system will be able to financially and effectively deal with the future demands of our citizens, most importantly our young people.

This committee therefore recommends that the province commit itself to a complete study of the existing school system, involving full dialogue with all players in the game, in an effort to react to the many problems of the present system and to prepare us for the increasing demands of today's society and to advance into the future with an education system that is responsive to change.

Regarding the subject of adult education, there is a consensus among the public that there are too many players in this field, both government and all school systems, including community colleges. It is perceived that there is duplication and that one system should be responsible for adult education. Possibly community colleges could co-ordinate all areas of adult education.

This committee recommends one authority be given sole responsibility for adult education.

There is much concern at the municipal level over proposed lot levies for education purposes. We see this as a threat to housing initiatives particularly in rural or slow-growth areas and an intrusion into a municipal jurisdiction. We realize the problems of capital financing for education but do not believe that levies are the solution.

This committee recommends that there should not be lot levies allowed for education financing. We are told that new education initiatives have been introduced by the province without prior extensive consultation with the boards and often without adequate funding. It is this committee's feeling that school boards are conversant with the problems of day-to-day education and should always be consulted prior to the introduction of any new education programs.

It is therefore recommended that prior to introducing any new education programs, there be a consultation process involving school board representatives.

It has been indicated to this committee that the education system should not be the provider of day care services. The education system should continue to give its full attention to education matters—its mandate. We should not distract either administration or the teachers from the basic responsibilities for which they are trained—education.

The education system must also not be burdened with the additional cost of day care and the matter of child care must be left outside of the education system. Teaching professionals should never be considered for day care services. It is therefore our recommendation that day care services be left out of the education system.

On the matter of the school year, it is our belief that any legislation changes thereto should be made optional for the discretion of individual school boards so that local needs and situations can be addressed. It is therefore recommended that the school year dates be optional to the discretion of individual school boards.

The foregoing is respectfully submitted for consideration by the select committee as it

responds to its assigned task. We thank you for the opportunity of being able to address you on the important subject of education. I would also like to mention that the three members here are more than willing to answer questions. Each of us represents a county in our area. The problems seem to be common, but as far as the local geographics for each area, the members are quite willing to answer questions.

The Chairman: Thank you. I will start the questioning with Noble Villeneuve. He will be followed by Richard Johnston and Taras Kozyra.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you very much for not pulling any punches and coming right to the point and making some recommendations, and certainly also for the additional documentation from the different municipalities. I see there is not full consensus in the area that I represent. That is fair game, and we have known that all along.

The 60 per cent provincial funding is always an elusive figure. I gather the funding of education at the public level is somewhere in the 40 per cent range right now. You are quite obviously still looking at a real-estate-based method of taxation.

Could you elaborate on what changes you would see in the system to make it more equitable? We know that the farm tax rebate, which is a very important aspect of funding of education, and rebates back to agriculture—we realize there is considerable inequity there. How could you further correct that so that inequities vis-à-vis real-estate holdings could be brought under control?

Mr Elliott: We discussed with the school board last week the fact that there are inadequacies in funding from both boards. One area that they pointed out is that we have three or four federal buildings in our jurisdiction and they pay absolutely no property tax to any of the school boards. They think this would be another way of financing, if you could persuade our federal counterparts to do likewise.

There are other areas of concern, too. We feel the present system has to be looked at for funding purposes and it has to be very equitable. There are large disparities between the two boards. They realize this and they are trying to come to a common consensus on it. It has caused a lot of debate and dissension within the ranks in our school board system in the three counties.

Mrs Ross: I may also add as well that you are correct; our funding, the level right now, is around 42 per cent. As well as the other concern heard from the board members and the general public, in rural Ontario our students have a very

difficult time competing with the urban, so-called Metropolitan Toronto area in that the financing available to our local boards does not allow them to give the level of education, as far as equipment and other necessities are concerned, to compete with the urban students when they do enter the post-secondary schooling area.

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Mr Villeneuve: There is a very difficult area there. This year there was a 17 per cent increase in the school portion of tax assessment. Of course, the whole thing comes as one tax bill. You are municipal people from the three great counties I represent, and I know it has created a dilemma, as have the lot levies. We are not in an area where lots are very valuable or expensive and at times difficult to sever.

Could you comment a bit on the lot levy situation and why you strongly recommend against it? Second, what would you suggest that could be oriented towards alleviating the responsibility and the blame that you people as municipal officials get for any tax increase, regardless of what it is oriented towards?

Mrs Ross: Perhaps I will start by saying that I know our local municipality does separate the education levy from the municipal levies on our tax bills. That has helped me somewhat as a municipal politician. I must also say that local residents have become very aware of the high, increased costs of education through their own education. They have educated themselves in this area.

Second, the lot levy part of it is that we are basically a rapidly growing residential area. We have a very low commercial-industrial base to work from. In our minds, it would definitely be a deterrent for the residential growth in our area, which just seems to be starting to pick up at a rate that we are happy with. It would also be a burden to young people starting out or older people who are building their retirement homes. Our lot costs—and I can relate to our municipality in particular—are running around \$10,000 to \$15,000 a lot, which is fairly inexpensive compared to many other areas, but the income level in our area is certainly high enough for that type of resident.

Mr Elliott: I think the other important thing to point out on lot levies is the fact that it is another taxation that the province will probably make a municipality collect. I have been on municipal council for over nine years and at times we have difficulty collecting taxes, we carry the tax burden and collect interest on that. The big thing is that people are saying: "Our taxes are high

enough. We just cannot afford for you to put on a \$2,000 or \$3,000 lot levy on young people who are starting out." This has been suggested by other municipalities.

I must stress that a lot of these young people are opting out of urban areas and into our rural area, our municipality. They are going there, as Mrs Ross suggested, for the cheaper type of lot and financing when it comes to mortgages and stuff. It has really changed the pattern of rural Ontario and put development pressures on our municipalities. We are in continual conflict with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food over rural lot development. When it comes down to spending today, these young couples are very conscientious about where their dollars are going to come from to finance their future and also education.

Our boards met with us last week; it is 17 per cent this year and they said it would be double digits next year again. There is no doubt in my mind that we are facing a crisis situation in education financing in this province.

Mr Villeneuve: I will relinquish to my colleagues, because I know this excellent brief is going to bring a lot more questions.

The Chairman: You have hit the nail on the head. We have approximately 10 or 11 minutes left and we have Mr Johnston, Mr Kozyra, Mrs O'Neill and Mr Jackson. So be warned, time is brief.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have been provocative and I think that is great. Obviously, as well, it is not often that counties come together to present briefs to committees. I think that is very salutary and I really appreciate it very much. I agree with some of the things and disagree with others, which would be expected from such a provocative brief.

Let me ask you about one of the areas which I find fascinating, the notion of adult education, that perhaps the community college in the area should have the overall responsibility and mete out the programs in a more organized fashion than perhaps is happening at the moment, if I can be euphemistic.

Have you thought at all about some of the difficulties that exist in doing that, not just in terms of territorial imperative, which I am sure would be hard on some boards of education to give up, but more in terms of community colleges' catchment areas often do not fit the same geographical areas as do the boards, as they are structured and that sort of thing. In your discussions did you have any thoughts about how that could be handled? You may know that on the

pooling suggestions that are coming forward to the government, they are now talking about trying to make all the Catholic and Protestant boards as coterminous as possible. To then put continuing education on top of that with another group which may not fit those coterminous areas might be problematic.

Mr Thompson: Being an adult and a senior, as a matter of fact, maybe I could comment on that. We did not perceive necessarily removing adult education from the public board school, for instance. We just felt that there had to be one co-ordinating group and it seemed logical to us that community colleges would fit that need. Adult education should not be a burden on the public or the separate board, where they are charged with the responsibility of educating our young people. But still, for instance, in our area, being very much rural, we could see that the classrooms should be used from the public system and the secondary system in adult education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That brings us to my second question. I will leave my third off, so somebody else can get in. It concerns day care and your restriction for financial reasons primarily, as I see it, of the notions of responsibility to the—

Mr Thompson: Well, partly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, I will come back to that—to the age group which is mandated under the Education Act. If you move to your approach, which is to move away from the property tax base entirely, then does that relieve some of your anxieties about both ends, the adult end and the day care end of things? Because in many educators' minds these days the notion of lifelong education and that early childhood education takes place in day care, in some ways in a more meaningful way than it does in kindergarten in my view, that if that financial burden was taken off that the logic of the continuity of education as a lifelong experience would still mean the schools would be a place for those two ends of things.

Mr Thompson: I think, Mr Johnston, you have a point in a way, but not entirely. It is more than just a financial consideration. There are a lot of questions on the part of our people about whether day care is really an education program. It is really a custodial thing. After all, children two years of age have a learning process certainly, growing is a learning process, but is it an educational process?

Mr R. F. Johnston: In my view it is. Speaking for my child of two years of age, in fact 19 months now, a one-to-five ratio with her day care and doing the same kind of creative play things that are done in kindergarten a year and a half later, I would say that it is. But the thing that surprises me, from your position, is that boards, even if they do not believe in it on an educational basis these days, are often moving into day care for reasons of trying to get kids into their system, as compared with the opposing system. So even from that perspective I am surprised that you are wanting to step out of the competition to get the kids into your system.

Mr Elliott: I do not want to take too much time up here, but I must say that day care is an issue on its own. We have in our community a group of mothers who went together to form a play school group. It is done out of the church hall on a co-operative basis and everybody pays on an equitable basis if he wants his child in this program. I think you have to put some of the onus back on the public. The public has to be responsible in this education process right from day care through to adult education.

In urban areas I do see a need for day care facilities because of the present social conditions in this province where both mom and dad have to work out. In rural areas it might be an entirely different story. I really sympathize with people from urban areas, but in rural areas like ours each little village would have to get into the process of providing the facilities within their school system for day care and we already have facilities that we can utilize and keep costs down.

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Mr Thompson: Mr Johnston, would you ever consider using teachers for this purpose, teachers who are trained to—

Mr Keyes: Do not get provocative now. Do not answer.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I definitely will. It is an excellent question, but I think it is often put the wrong way around. In my view, most of our kindergarten teachers could learn a great deal from the early childhood education that people learn to deal with day care kids. I would like to see the standards as we move into the school system and the lines of responsibility made much more clear as to where they are now, because we are neither here nor there in terms of the role of child care in the school system at the moment. But I would think that there is much to be learned from early childhood educators that a lot of teachers could pick up these days.

Mrs Ross: Keep in mind, though, Mr Johnston, that we are talking about pre-kindergarten, which is one year younger for a child to be into the school system.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In my understanding, places like France have had universal day care available from the age of two since 1946.

The Chairman: I do not mean to cut off such a stimulating debate, but we do have a number of other questioners.

Mr Kozyra: Thank you, very quickly. I caught a common theme in your brief and I thought it was a very good brief, because it had focus and recommendations after identifying each problem. The common theme was that of streamlining by dropping certain aspects that could be better served elsewhere or not at all. The two you identified as elsewhere, adult education in the colleges, perhaps, and day care outside the system. But the prekindergarten, and maybe I missed something in the question and reply to Mr Johnston, but you did not identify that. Are you advocating dropping it altogether or having it elsewhere?

Mrs Ross: I think that would be the choice of the parents, as well as the educational system. I do not believe, as do the public—and there are pros and cons. There are parents who have had their children in the system who are happy with it. But the consensus as well—one comment that was made to us that was taken very much so in our consideration before making this recommendation is that a prekindergarten program forces a parent to enrol his child into it because of peer pressure. They would feel quite agreeable that the prekindergarten program be discontinued and be in a nursery school form program or private day care program, rather than in the educational system. Although the education is still received, it is in another form.

Mr Kozyra: On your point for the plea for prior consultation, if I can paraphrase Winston Churchill, you are saying boards are being asked to do too much for too many for too few dollars. Is that the basis of the consultation?

Mrs Ross: Having met with the directors and chairmen of both our local school boards they also, at least, led us to believe, and who are we to argue with them, that they are not informed prior to initiatives or new programs being implemented. They quite often receive notification through press releases. Those are the people who we have to deal with and listen to their concerns. We went to great lengths to make sure that every area was covered.

As well as the educators, we have interviewed or met with people in the education field, as well as the board level, as well as the general public, who are, in the end result, the payers for the education field. But that was the concern that the board had, that they are not being notified or consulted with prior to.

Mrs O'Neill: Together with other members of the committee, I want to congratulate you for the effort and the time you have put in to making this presentation. It will be most helpful to us.

I wanted to verify that I understand some of the answers you have already given. Does prekindergarten that include an acceptance of four-year-old kindergarten, or are you also having difficulty with that initiative? Prekindergarten is before four years; right?

Mrs Ross: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: The other answer that was given regarding the sole responsibility for adult education, I understood the answer to be the public school system. I am not sure whether I heard that correctly. Have you designated the one authority and is it the public school system?

Mr Thompson: We felt it was the community college system that should be the co-ordinating group for adult education.

Mr Elliott: But we must have something in mind, that public schools and separate schools are available for any adult who wants to go back into the system and be re-educated. Our principal took a big initiative last year and they sent a survey home with students. Several of the moms who were not working in the community took computer science, French language and family studies. It was in this context of the school day last year and it has proven very successful. Three of those mothers graduated, and they all have jobs and are into the employment field now because of that successful initiative.

Mrs O'Neill: That was in the day school program?

Mr Elliott: That was in the regular school board day school program through the county board of education.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much. I wonder if you would say a little bit about your point 9, about the school year dates. Are you talking about year-long education, or are you talking about the regular March break and Christmas breaks?

Mr Elliott: I guess I am the one who has to answer that question. In our area, which is rural and tourist-oriented, we had read the second legislative committee report and we think it

should be left up to local boards. In our area, we have a lot of tourists with Upper Canada Village, which is a three-star tourist attraction, as you are well aware. It employs approximately 215 students on a regular basis. Our agriculture industries are oriented so that production times peak in June, July and August, and many of our students are from rural backgrounds and must work on the family farms. They must also work in the local milk-processing plants, ie, Ault Foods in Winchester and Kraft in Ingleside where I am employed, and we employ approximately 75 students at that location alone.

It is sheer economics and common sense that the school year not interfere with these employment opportunities. Many of our young people do have their summer jobs for experience and also to put money into education at the college and university level. Some of them do start, at the age of 16, saving for their future. The economics of today require this.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope you will encourage your school board to become one of the pilot projects that will result from the second report of our committee.

My final question is, the Osnabruck letter seems to indicate that there is a concern regarding school board reserves. Did you take a survey of your school boards to see the kind of reserves they have, and is that a general county problem, would you suggest?

Mrs Ross: Yes. Either of these gentlemen can correct me if I am wrong, but what has happened with the decrease in funding is our public board has had to dip into their reserves to try to offset some of the costs, even though our increase this year locally was 17 per cent, by our local board. I think that is the concern, if they start decreasing their reserves to offset the annual costs then they are in definite financial trouble.

Mrs O'Neill: The boards you are talking about, do they have guidelines for their reserves or are they just wanting to have them build. That, of course is a concern, from my point of view, school board reserves that are not either governed by guidelines or designated for certain purposes. Have you examined that question with them?

Mrs Ross: No, we have not, but I would suggest to you that you keep that question in mind, because our local board will be going before this committee very soon.

Mrs O'Neill: I think I might.

Mr Jackson: Most of my questions were asked, but I would like to just get a finer point on the adult continuing education recommendation.

It is a unique one, and it is an important one since the government has not given clear direction to the Dobell report with respect to where financing of continuing adult education will lie. I have concerns where certain boards do provide it and a coterminous board does not provide it. As you know, that puts them in the form of a breach with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the principle of separate school funding in so far as you have got separate school supporters who pay no public school taxes but who are being subsidized on these programs.

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One might reasonably extend that for anyone taking adult and continuing education that is heavily subsidized, that it comes at the expense of the regular day school programs. I was pleased that you made the distinction between those people who take regular day programming—I make a clear distinction between that and, say, a bridge program or any of the other interest programs which are sometimes brought within the umbrella of continuing education.

I just wonder if you can enlighten us as to the situation in your area with respect to the board's involvement in adult and continuing education, if the separate board has got around to getting involved in it or if just the public board is involved, if this matter has been raised with you and if you are sensitive to it.

Mr Thompson: Just the public board as yet.

Mr Elliott: I guess I can relate to that. My wife is in the situation where she is going back for retraining, and she has had three alternatives. She will be taking one of the initiatives in January. She can go through the school board system, through the outreach program of Canada Manpower or through the initiative of St Lawrence College. There you have not only duplication; she has three choices she can make before 1 January.

There are great opportunities to be re-educated. I think we have to look at the duplication and use the facilities we have—I stress “utilize the facilities”—for adult education. We can use our school facilities after hours in our local communities. We need these because we are spread out over an area of three counties, representing over 13 municipalities. I really feel that we have to look at adult education from that perspective and not duplicate it.

Mr Jackson: I just wish to commend this presentation. It is obvious they have put a lot of thought into this. You have touched on areas we are not getting a lot of presentation on, and to that

extent this committee is appreciative, but it also speaks of a lot of effort and thought that has gone into it, so in that sense it will be very helpful.

Mr Thompson: Could I comment? I think you will find in our presentation that the theme that runs through the whole thing is duplication. We just do not feel that the public, the taxpayer, can any longer afford the duplication that is occurring in the education system. That is why we are recommending that it has to be completely looked at. We are of the opinion that it has to be modernized to react to today's and the future's needs. We feel we have a system with us that goes back to the ages and has been added to and added to, a postage-stamp type of thing. We think it has to be completely studied, with maybe a completely different outlook on the whole education system.

The Chairman: Thank you. We do have one final supplementary from Mr Villeneuve.

Mr Villeneuve: It is a supplementary, Ed. You would be familiar with the Timothy Christian School, as are probably all the others but particularly those in Dundas county, and busing. We have many vehicles travelling the roads. I live on one of those county roads and I probably see five school buses go by my place every morning. Could you comment a little bit on that? Do you feel that we could incorporate transportation, for instance, including the private schools such as Timothy Christian School, the public separate schools and the public public schools?

Mr Thompson: That is what we are suggesting. It is saying "one administration system." We feel it is a necessity so that you do not get these duplications. We get this all the time, buses going down the road picking up one student for the public board and next door there is another bus for the secondary. Economically, this cannot go on. We cannot continue with this type of duplication. We cannot afford it any more.

Mr Villeneuve: So your orientation towards one administration would therefore look at the entire gamut, not only in the classroom but outside the classroom, as well. I think it is an excellent suggestion.

Mr Thompson: This suggestion, to us, has a lot of merit. We know there are going to be a lot of problems in trying to amalgamate. There are going to be a lot of growing pains, but we are going to have to look at some way to stop this escalating of costs.

Mr Elliott: I am going to speak just briefly from the perspective of a young parent. I have a

teenager, a child who is a bit younger and a three-year-old. My concern is, why should we divide our children at an early age into different school systems?

My three-year-old goes and plays with the little Catholic boy from the separate school down the street, and then they go into the different school systems. They go to play hockey together in the community, they go to scouts or cubs together, and then they go to a college or university together. I am saying we should have one school system and teach heritage language studies and religion within that system and not divide our children. I think this country has a lot going for us if we can stay united.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you for including all the briefs that you had submitted by the different municipalities. I think this is going to add considerably to the excellent presentation you have made.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Villeneuve, for expressing the thanks of the committee.

Certainly your last comment could explode into another whole hour of debate if we allowed it to, but as chair, part of my job is to try to keep us relatively on time. So I do thank you for the time and effort you have made to appear before us today. It has been very stimulating.

Mrs Ross: We thank you as well. One thought for the committee to keep in mind at the end: Our saying is that what you put into education today will reap you unequalled benefits tomorrow for our young people.

The Chairman: I think that is something we can all agree on.

Our next delegation will be a parent group from Parent-Ade. If you would like to come forward, please.

Ms M. Jackson: We have four people present. Could we bring one more chair to the table?

The Chairman: We noticed we do have a logistical problem, but being very flexible and intrepid, we decided a possible solution might be if the fourth member of your committee came around to this microphone right here which is available. Okay, our clerk has brought a fourth chair. If the fourth member of your group would like to come up; whatever is more comfortable.

If you would just begin by identifying yourselves individually for the purposes of Hansard. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation and we do hope you will leave some time for questions from the members.

PARENT-ADE

Ms M. Jackson: My name is Marilyn Jackson, and I am a member of Parent-Ade. On my left is Marnie Horton, also a member. On my right is Kate Irish, also a member. The representative who has chosen not to join us at the table is Sandy Magwood.

We have come today to make this presentation in person with a view to putting a personal face on our concerns. If I can avoid reading directly from our presentation, I am going to try.

The Parent-Ade group has a rather peculiar name; it sounds like something you drink. The object of our coming together was that each and every member of the group has a child who has been identified as having a handicap or a special need in the Hastings education system. We have been meeting for about a year. What we do at our meetings is exchange information that each of us may have acquired which the others might benefit by, explore resources and services that are available to us and to invite guests from time to time who might be able to add some additional background to what we are already aware of in the educational system or any other services we may partake of.

We are particularly happy to have had this special committee touring at this time, because it coincides closely with a study of a very minor degree that we made in the spring, of funding in our own particular system and funding as it addresses the needs of special-needs children. So having formed some thoughts after hearing our speaker on that day, we found it very useful to have an opportunity to put these forward to a committee that is looking towards the whole direction of education in the future.

We come from an area that is off the beaten track, I think. This is the kind of area about which most people who live in a large urban community would say: "Oh, I drive there on the way to the cottage," or: "I remember that. We passed through that town on our way to Ottawa." Our communities, our villages: none of them are larger than 2,000 people, and there is a rural hinterland that adds maybe 12,000 to the population, but in all we hardly constitute the size of a small town in southern Ontario.

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That gives us a really special perspective on children with handicaps. It is a special perception that you probably will not meet with when you are talking with parents in larger urban communities, because the services that are available there are so much more extensive than what we have, the distances are not so great to travel to take

advantage of those services and they are perhaps not quite as dependent on their educational system as we are to see that their children meet and achieve the greatest potential they can.

We also hope the committee will appreciate that our perspective is not the same as that of densely populated urban centres, but it is shared by a great many other smaller communities in Ontario which are outside the Golden Horseshoe and that wonderful corridor between Montreal and Windsor.

We understand this committee is engaged in appraising the current system of education and evaluating its strengths and shortcomings, and will make recommendations for future direction.

We want first to say that we applaud the guiding principle behind Bill 82, guaranteeing to each individual child an education that meets his needs within his community. I might add that among the children who are represented by the parents in our group, we have a child who is blind but very bright; we have a number of children who are generally developmentally handicapped; we have children who have attention deficits and behaviour problems; we have some children who are physically handicapped as well, and a number who would fall under the term "multi-handicapped." So we see quite a variety of perceptions among the parents of what problems can consist of.

We ask that in all your recommendations this principle that is embodied in Bill 82 remain paramount and that it be applied carefully, conscientiously and universally. We ask that policies be structured so as not to neglect the special needs and unique potential of the children who fall outside the mainstream.

One of our members, whose child attends a provincial school for the hearing-impaired, has asked me to point out that there seems to be an anomaly in the application of Bill 82 as regards provincial schools. Whereas regular boards of education must conduct identification and placement reviews and elicit the parents' consent to the suggested placement, this process is not required within the provincial schools. The parents have no guarantee by legislation of a right to appeal the proposed placement of their children within the provincial school, and their options are limited to persuasion or to removal of the child from that school if they cannot find a common ground with the administration.

We suggest that this be corrected by amendment to the legislation so that all parents and children have the same rights within the province as regards their placement.

We applaud the general move towards integration of special-needs children into the regular school system. We would prefer to see segregated schools phased out altogether.

I had a particular conversation with a mother whose child is one who is quite profoundly developmentally handicapped. I think it might be interesting for you to hear what she had to say about that. Her child is in a situation where special services are delivered to him. They could be delivered to him quite efficiently in a completely segregated situation. It might not make a great deal of difference to him. She is entirely supportive of having special situations within the integrated schools, because she feels that this will prepare all the children in that school over the long run to be able to deal with and accept a child with his limitations in society at large.

One of the objectives of integration is to provide the exceptional child with the company and stimulation of his peers so that he is encouraged to learn both academically and socially to his own optimum capacity. Another objective is to familiarize normal children from their earliest experience with all the variety and uniqueness of the human family, so that we build a society that is not tormented by fear and misunderstanding.

These are lofty goals and it is too much to hope that they can be achieved simply by moving special-needs children into the schools without a powerful commitment on the part of the system providing the complex and expensive infrastructure that is necessary to make that work.

Some of our perceptions of inclusions in that infrastructure would be preparation of all the teachers in the course of their training to meet the significant challenges of program adaptation and classroom management when they have special-needs students integrated in their classes. To illustrate that point, I will tell you that I have heard teachers remark that they are a little afraid of having my child, particularly, in their class. They do not quite know how to handle that. That has not historically been part of the training of a regular classroom teacher. We are asking that it be considered something that all of them should be made more comfortable with in their training.

Ready access to special resources such as speech therapy, Braille trailing, augmentive communication devices and trained persons to present them: Speech therapy, in particular, is a terrifically neglected area in the school boards. It is almost impossible to get individual attention from a speech therapist. In fact, in Hastings

county, my understanding is that a child has to be 90 per cent unintelligible before that child will be able to get one-on-one speech therapy. Other than that, the speech therapists are only able to attend on an infrequent basis, do assessments and make suggestions for applications in the classroom. Beyond that there is no real access.

We would like to see continued availability of as much flexibility of choice as possible for each child at each stage of his or her school career, as between special education classes, full-time and part-time integration. In other words, the boards cannot afford, if they are going to serve these children with special needs, to go in one direction and to eliminate the other options. There are still times and places where only withdrawal is going to give a child that particular atmosphere that will facilitate his special learning. There are other times, not only times in the day but times in the year and times in his life, when being able to get right into a classroom situation is ideal for him or her. If we are forced in the direction of eliminating some of those options, in the long run it is going to mean that the needs are just not met.

We are suggesting that there should be, if at all possible, reduction in the overall pressure on teachers in terms of classroom size when it is necessary. Teachers are already coping with a tremendous burden. It is difficult for them to assimilate a child with very special needs into a class where they already have 27 to 30 lively grade 1 students whose parents are all expecting the very best of education for them.

We are suggesting—we have suggested to our own board—that a policy be looked at of introducing in-house behavioural consultants. So often when we hear that integration is not working in a school, what is causing the problem is behaviour on the part of the special-needs child who is having some difficulty working in with the regular ones. Most of the teachers have not had any kind of training themselves in behaviour modification and so on. The boards also do not as a rule have anyone on staff whose particular mandate is to look at those problems and to nip them in the bud before the class is so disrupted that everyone is saying integration is a bad thing.

There needs to be a medium for really effective dialogue between the school administration and the parents of both special-needs and regular pupils so that their concerns about integration can be openly expressed and worked out in an atmosphere of co-operation. Again, it is something that boards are having difficulty finding a way to move towards, because to address the parents of normal children and try to introduce

those who are different to them and explain what is going on is centring out the children who are not normal. There is that difficulty of resentment from the parents of children who are not normal. On the other hand, if there is not some preparation made and some kind of regular ongoing vehicle for solving problems, the resentments build up between the two groups and eventually there is a contention overall that integration does not work. It is not fair and it is not correct.

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Also key to successful integration is the availability of skilled paraprofessionals who can work one on one with a special-needs pupil in the integrated setting. That person is the touchstone in the days of the special-needs child, the constant who can see that the child's program is being implemented when the teacher is occupied elsewhere, who can take the emotional or behavioural edge off when the child is having difficulty coping. That person will be a quiet ambassador where a word of explanation is needed immediately to make some action or reaction of the special-needs child understandable to others. That person is the one who can be counted on to help the child compensate for his or her disability when it is required, and likewise to stand back at other times and allow independence and self-confidence to grow.

Our submission to you is that there is no consistent policy towards paraprofessionals of this nature in the Ontario school system at present. Each board has its own classification terminology, each has its own prerequisites for credentials, each has its own pay scales, its own policies for deployment. Some of the paraprofessionals are unionized; some of them are not. Some of them do almost identical jobs, work in the same classrooms together and yet are treated quite differently by their boards and would be treated quite differently again were they to be employed in a different board altogether.

We are parents. We really see at first hand what a critical role these people play and what a tremendous burden they are actually sharing with the professionals in seeing that integration does work. We would like to see the school system as a whole recognize their contribution by delivering to them a decent rate of pay and a more secure place in the education team. To treat them as casual staff with no status, no benefits, and to pay them hourly wages which barely exceed the minimum is to invite burnout, resentment and high turnover. We believe the school system really has not addressed this situation as yet. The

situation has risen as a reaction; there has been no real proactive effort made to determine how paraprofessionals should be treated overall in the system.

To support that kind of effective integrated system is expensive. There is no getting around it. There is no saying, "We've solved the problem by implementing integration, and now we've saved all the money on the special schools and everything is cheaper." It is not going to be; it is never going to be. There is no point in pretending to anybody that it is going to be; it probably will be more expensive in the long run.

This is not written here, but I am saying to you now, as we all say to each other, that the money has to be returned in the long run because the more functioning individuals you can keep in a society, the less long-run cost there is going to be for maintaining them in institutions or with dramatic support systems as they reach adulthood.

We know that educational funding comes partially from the provincial government and partially from the local municipal taxpayer. As this was explained to us by our board representative, there is a component which is at the very base of the budget structure which is necessarily derived from municipal taxes. There is then, as I understand it, a general grant over and above that. The general grant goes to a ceiling, which is what the provincial government deems to be the minimum amount of spending that board should be doing in order to provide an adequate education for the children within its area.

We are advised that up until this current year there were also special grants that were tagged and identified as being for trainable retarded and multihandicapped children; and that the special grants have now been rescinded and the general grants have been increased fairly substantially. We are aware that that move has been made in an attempt to make an equal treatment of all students. We are aware that there is some legitimacy in saying, "If we give all the boards a fairly generous per capita rate for all the students enrolled, then they will, in turn, responsibly allocate those general grants and continue to serve."

What we found in the Hastings board is that, for one thing, the cost of special education increased. The grants did not cover those increases in cost. So there is a vying within the budget between the special ed program and all those other programs which need to be funded through the general grant. There is no longer any kind of protection or guarantee given to those

children, who are essentially the very vulnerable in our society, that there will always be funds accessible to them on a universal basis.

The Chairman: I know you are at the crux of your brief right now. I just want to let you know that you have about 10 minutes left. You might like to précis some parts so that we have some time for questions, but it is up to you how you want to do it.

Ms M. Jackson: Point taken, Madam Chairman. I do want to make the point, though, carrying on from what I was saying, that this new increase in the general grant is overly simplistic, and we are saying to you that, to begin with, not every board has an equal representation of special-needs children within its board. Consequently, the allocation, whatever component there is in that fixed per capita general grant, has to stretch a lot farther in some of the boards. That is not being appreciated in the general overall treatment.

On the other hand, there are boards that have no programs at all for multihandicapped or trainable retarded children. They are, at least for this interim period, getting what would seem to be a windfall. They are getting large amounts of money for which they have no particular program at present. On the other side of the slate, there are children who have been served in other boards to whom those moneys are no longer available.

Eventually Bill 82 is going to require that all the boards have some programs in place but, for the present, this pool of provincial moneys that historically was tagged for multihandicapped programming has been split up, diluted and, in some cases, streamed through boards where it will necessarily be diverted to other programs.

We think that a profound error in planning has taken place in this restructuring of funding and we are suggesting to this committee that funding should once again be tied to the programs. If the programs are in place or if they are imminently going to be in place, by all means, fund them, but keep in mind and keep the funding tied to those children who are identified so that their needs are met in accordance with and in measure of their needs. Otherwise, they are on the playing field with all the other needs and priorities that are brought to bear within a school board, and they cannot speak all that well for themselves.

The government has moved tremendously in the direction of looking to the needs of special children. We do not want to lose ground. I think that is what we are saying. We think the system is moving well now, but we regard this particular funding restructuring as being retrogressive.

The other thing that is a topic of concern—and I am just going to generalize, précis or whatever—is that we have heard a good deal this summer and in the past year too of the need for Canada to become competitive in the world market. The fact is that we are way behind in our scientific and technological skills and we are not producing students who are able to compete and bring us up into the 21st century. I think that is manifested in the fact that there are still special grants for science. While the special grants have been eliminated for the multihandicapped, there are still special grants for science. I suspect we are going to see greater pressure for additional funding for science and technology.

We want to impress on educators at large that they are there, they are in the front lines, when we make the decision between whether we put all our energy behind being in a capitalist market and competing with all the rest of the industrial nations, or whether we remember that in Canada we have a specific character that we can be proud of, which is that we have traditionally regarded the people who are most vulnerable as those who deserve special care and attention so that our society is integrated and does not have as many losers.

It is right here in the education system that some of the key decisions have to be made in that. We are looking to you and asking that you tailor your recommendations with those thoughts in mind. That is the end of my formal presentation.

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The Chairman: Thank you very much for a very sensitive brief. You might be interested to know that we have already had several presentations back at Queen's Park from umbrella groups representing special-needs children.

Ms M. Jackson: I suspect that you have heard much of this before.

The Chairman: Yes. We just started our hearings last week, but we have already had a presentation from the Advisory Council on Special Education and the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. It is interesting that a number of the points you have made in a very articulate way were also made by them, but your brief has certainly highlighted in a much more personal way some of the points they had made.

Just before we go to Mr Johnston, I have a burning question I have to ask you. In the best of all possible worlds, we would know that there would be money there to do everything we wanted to do, but sometimes it appears we do not live in that best of all possible worlds and we

have very realistically pointed out how expensive this is going to be.

Are you concerned that, if the government decided to go into an even more integrated approach in restructuring and there were not sufficient moneys there to provide the teacher resources and all the extras that are necessary, your children might ultimately end up in a much worse position than they are right now?

Ms M. Jackson: Without a doubt. That is a major concern. I have perhaps addressed it obliquely in the brief but, yes, putting children into an integrated setting without that infrastructure is not going to achieve anything. I think it will break down very quickly too. If the programs are not very carefully tailored and monitored, the reaction from other parents will be, "No, our child can't get a decent education when all the attention is being given to one." Yes, of course we are concerned. I do not know whether Kate would like to speak to that.

Mrs Irish: I was just going to add to that and say that that is a given, except that we still cannot go back. We just cannot go back. If you cannot give us the funds or enough funding, do not tell us the best thing you can offer us then is to go back to segregated schools. It is just totally unacceptable.

Ms M. Jackson: We would prefer to struggle.

The Chairman: I guess my point is it is not a matter of going back; it is how far can you go and how quickly can you go. You do not want to put a system in place of total integration and then find that the massive resources necessary are not there and the child is the one who ends up—

Ms M. Jackson: I think we were trying to say that there are still needs for placements that are not fully integrated either; not fully integrated in regular classrooms. We would be loath to lose those for certain situations too. It is a very complex problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: To follow the Liberal apology on this matter, the promise was made by a previous government, and therefore followed by this one, that the funds would be available. Part of the problem is that they have not been.

I think the presumption that segregated classrooms are any less discriminatory in terms of who they provide assistance for is also incorrect. My view is that we get a lot of segregated classrooms these days which lump together kids with learning disabilities, kids with multiple handicaps. They presume every kid with every disability should be lumped in the same class, and that is often no particular solution either.

We have some really good integration models in the province where local boards are putting the funding in and, in fact, they do not turn out to be much more expensive than segregated settings on the whole. I am worried when groups like yours start to put up and agree to the notion that is put out there by people who are segregationists in principle that it is going to somehow be much more expensive if we do that, because I do not think there is any proof yet that full integration is necessarily more expensive than a segregated system at all.

I am very much sympathetic to the thrust you are taking. I believe the disabled child is as much an educator in the system as he is a receptor of education. That is something we often miss. The message we send out to other kids by segregating disabled kids is a very negative one and contradictory to some of the other social goals that we have. So I am pleased with that.

I was also really glad you pointed out the problems of the paraprofessionals in terms of the lack of consistent recognition, or recognition in funding formula. I think that is really important.

As you can see, most of what I want to do is make a comment about what you said and then get you to respond, rather than asking you a specific question. The one thing, though, I did want to follow up on is the notion of the grants. You do not have it exactly correct as to how the grants work.

There are specialized grants, and have been, for the trainable retarded. But the special ed grant has been based on the enrolment data of a particular board. They get so much money given the number of students they have for special ed. Then they can access that money, and have been able to for a number of years, to provide special education in one form or another.

Some of them provide much more than they get in provincial grants for special ed and some of them provide much less, and we are trying to discover where boards fall in those kinds of fields. Therefore, I am wondering about the study that you alluded to, as to whether or not you were able to identify the percentage of kids who are being identified as exceptional within the Hastings board.

There seems to be a fairly wide range across the province in terms of who is actually identified as exceptional and therefore given moneys, and whether or not the grants moneys that have been made available in the past have actually been used by your board to 100 per cent or over 100 per cent of what it received in the past. Did you manage to find that out?

Ms M. Jackson: I am sorry. We do not have any specific statistics on that.

I did, however, speak with Ron Denyes of the Hastings board, who is the financial chairman, and he pointed out that we do have a higher preponderance of identified special-needs children and children who are identified as TR, largely because there is an air base in the area, there are provincial schools in the area and, as he said, sometimes families will come to the area to attend the provincial schools, find it is not really satisfactory and move out into the public school system. Also, because of the less expensive housing available in our area, rather pleasant rural settings, there are a quite a number of group homes in Hastings county. So overall there are significantly larger numbers of identified TR and multihandicapped children per capita in Hastings than average.

I am sorry I do not know what the figures would be on the utilization of the grants. What I can say is that he estimated to me that this year, because of the reallocation of grants, the board is going to have to find \$400,000 from municipal taxpayers and it has caused a significant hike in the mill rate which they are concerned will not be extended over many, many years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that is something we should pursue, if we might, because in theory that should not take place.

Mrs Irish: My understanding is TR funding is going down in Hastings county even though our numbers are increasing. Our funding is going down because of that label change. Our labels are being done away with.

The Chairman: Perhaps we can ask either the ministry or research to try to obtain further information on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, I think that would be very interesting to see. If it turns out to be something which is true of Hastings, and if Bob can discover that, then maybe we should get an analysis done by the ministry as to whether this is a trend across the province or whether there are particular local things which make that the case in Hastings, because that was not the assumption of the grant.

I am very sympathetic to the notion that we should go back to an ideal of at least of being able to identify the special ed, although for effectiveness terms, we never did any follow-up to see just how the various boards were looking at it anyway. Therefore your notion of going to

programmatic allocation of funds is something again that I have sympathy for.

But the downside of that you should know about, in terms of public policy, is that once you start to get very particular about the dollars you are going to have for, say, dyslexic kids versus behaviour modification kids, and that sort of thing, then you end up moving away from concepts of universality in responsibility, and there is the danger of those dollars shrinking in comparison with those for the general child. That is the downside of trying to gear things too programmatically.

Mrs Irish: It is like parenthood. Nobody said it was going to be easy.

Mr R. F. Johnston: And they were sure right about that.

The Chairman: I think you will have unanimous agreement on this committee about parenthood not being easy. Thank you very much for your presentation. As I say, it was very sensitive and brought a number of issues to the fore that have to be looked at in the area of special education, and you have certainly targeted some of those issues for us.

Ms M. Jackson: Madam Chairman, I hope we will continue to have feedback from the committee as well and that we will all, having taken Mr Johnston's comments to heart, make a stronger effort to understand exactly what the funding mechanisms are and what the policies are in the schools, so that we can make intelligent comment and appraisal of what is happening.

The Chairman: It is certainly a very complex system, the system of financing of education, and we have had it on good authority that there are at least three people, or hopefully three people, in the whole ministry who do know what it all means, so please do not be too dismayed if you cannot quite understand the complexities.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will be sending out copies of the report to all presenters, I presume.

The Chairman: Yes, you will have a copy.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You will get that and can respond. We would welcome any responses to whatever it is we do come up with as a consensus.

The Chairman: Thank you very much. The select committee on education stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon in this room.

The committee recessed at 1221.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in the St Laurent Room, Ramada Inn, Kingston, Ontario.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good afternoon, I would like to reconvene the meeting of the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education, specifically relating to the equity, adequacy and accountability of operating in capital finances. Again, we are very pleased to be in the Kingston area for the first round of our out-of-town hearings, and we particularly welcome our next presenter, as we have heard from them on a number of occasions and on a number of different topics.

We bid a welcome to KASE, Kingston Area School to Employment Council. I am sure you know the routine by now, but if you would just start by identifying yourself for the purposes of Hansard, then you have 30 minutes for your presentation, including question time.

KINGSTON AREA SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL

Mr Merrin: My name is Jay Merrin. I am the chairperson for KASE.

Mr Meyers: Norman Meyers. I am the vice-chair for KASE.

Ms Dillon: I am Mary-Gayle Dillon. I am the managing director of KASE, and welcome to Kingston.

Mr Meyers: First of all, an apology for not having copies. That will be remedied in the very near future. I do not have them. Our executive director has poison ivy and she just did not feel like doing it. Second, on a lighter note, I would like to have you note—perhaps even for Hansard—that the weather we have ordered up is explicitly for you and advise you that we can also order rain if it ever becomes necessary.

The Kingston Area School to Employment Council is a community-based organization that is made up of individuals from the public and private sectors of our community. It has active representation by business, labour, government, parents, students and educators. The KASE Council appreciates this opportunity to air for your consideration some ideas and suggestions that we have for the future of education financing.

The seed from which KASE is growing is a community-based recognition that there is a wide crack between the formal education system and the world of quality work. By quality work we accept that dignity in work exists only when a person is properly prepared for that work and makes the choice to do that work from an informed platform. The goal of KASE is to make a very real contribution to the transition of youth and others who may find themselves at that crack from school to quality work.

We are not a school board, and KASE was not created to be a vehicle of the school boards of education; rather we are an external organization made up of people in the real world now, who work directly with educators to facilitate the school-to-work transition and thereby help educators attain the goals of education.

Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions cites 13 goals of education. The good work of KASE actively impacts on at least five of these goals. They include: goal 6, to develop a feeling of self-worth; goal 7, to acquire skills that contribute to self-reliance; goal 9, to develop a sense of personal responsibility; goal 11, to acquire skills and attitudes that will lead to satisfaction and productivity in the world of work; and goal 13, to develop values related to personal, ethical or religious beliefs and to the common welfare of society.

I think the strongest contribution that KASE makes and where it clearly focuses its efforts and programs is to goal 11: to acquire skills and attitudes that will lead to satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. We are delivering effective programs that contribute significantly to the realization of this and these goals.

In last spring's throne speech there were words that indicated you wanted to broaden the focus of technological studies. We delivered our employer career development sessions. We delivered FAME, Females and Meaningful Employment, which focuses on nontraditional occupations. The speech indicated you wanted to re-evaluate technological skills. We delivered a pilot project entitled The Dignity of Work.

The speech indicated that you wanted to promote alternative delivery modes such as school-workplace apprenticeship programs. We delivered an alternative career choices program in the skilled trades and we are developing a pre-apprenticeship program. Both of these programs are geared to encourage and promote

skilled trades and nontraditional careers before a decision of apprenticeship is made. We would respectfully have you note that we did most of these before the speech from the throne had even been written.

During the discussion phase of the throne speech the question was asked: How will business and industry be involved in this initiative?, the initiative again being the renewal or the review of technological studies. You may remember that the reply included the statement, "We need to ensure the relevance of technological studies education to changing technological and employment needs."

It included the phrases: "Business and industry will be involved in the development of initiatives at all levels;" "School boards will be encouraged to build on existing partnerships with business and industry and to explore new partnerships;" and "Employers will be encouraged to participate with schools in delivering the new programs through co-operative education and other alternative delivery models." I end the quotes.

We humbly but proudly submit that we already are, and have been for some time, contributing to this initiative and we are delivering new programs. We are, for example, pleased to advise that we have been granted funding by the Department of Employment and Immigration to conduct a pilot project for secondary school students who have decided to leave school before receiving their diplomas. The theme of this pilot is The Dignity of Work.

As I suggested earlier, there is indeed dignity in all work. The indignity is when work is performed by someone who is there without a choice or without preparation. The Dignity of Work program is an attempt to provide a number of alternative occupations in the trades to students who will then recognize a need to return to school in order to gain sufficient education, which will enable them to enter an apprenticeship program or to obtain the job they desire.

This program is a real winner. If the student chooses not to return to school, it will have operated as a comprehensive exit package, which is something that education cannot reasonably provide. Further, the program has the potential of affecting every student who drops out of the education system by providing him with the tools necessary to obtain quality employment.

There is evidence, with the formation of the superministry, which includes, as you know, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Skills Development and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, that there is a trend towards

programs such as The Dignity of Work. KASE is already actively engaged in delivering relevant, effective education and therefore deserves to be recognized as a cost-benefit scheme in the business of education. Our goals are linked to all three ministries and we are not competing with the education system.

Before I get to the point, which is funding, as you may suspect, I would like to make a brief comment on accountability. Reforms in education outlined in the speech from the throne contained the following principle: ensuring accountability by measuring basic skills at key points in a child's development, reporting the results to parents and providing remediation where needed.

We understand that accountability in this context relates to programs within the educational system, but we ask why accountability stops there. All of our programs are required to demonstrate effectiveness as well, and we are also immediately accountable to government, its agencies or the organizations that fund the program. If our programs fail to show effectiveness, the money stops. Conversely, many government grants to education are based solely on a per capita basis, and that begs the question: Is there any real incentive to be accountable for programs funded in this way?

Most of the students we target are at-risk students or students who have fallen off the edge of the educational system. These students are harder to program for, yet KASE is responsible for immediate accountability or the funding stops.

Finally, this leads us to the point. KASE and organizations like KASE can deliver effective programs that aid and complement the goals of education. However, if there is to be a continuity in effective programming, there needs to be a continuity in funding. We will not serve efficiently if we are always in a position of expending a large percentage of our energy in ensuring that we have sufficient administrative funding to carry us through to the next year. If there is to be continuity in programming, there must also be continuity in funding.

Madam Chairman and audience, I thank you.

1420

The Chairman: Thank you. I will now call for questions from members.

Mr R. F. Johnston: First, I will say that I think we all respect the initiatives you have taken in terms of skills development. I think that is great. I want to ask you, though, about the other side of accountability, which is accountability in

dollars within the education system to the general public. That is not just the groups you are working with, or even in terms of some assessment of how you are doing with at-risk kids, but in terms of the kinds of things that a board of education has to be accountable to, that is, to the electorate at large for dollars that are made available to them. How do you see yourselves as different from private schools or other organizations which do not provide that level of accountability? What would you presume to have as accountability along those kind of terms?

Mr Meyers: I will just take part of that, and perhaps ask Mr Merrin to comment as well. The comments we made here are not perhaps to offer a solution or even an alternative but simply to suggest that we are spending a tremendous amount of our time being accountable. That is absolutely necessary. There is no argument on that. But I guess it is a bit of a catch-22. We would rather be doing more productive, immediate things to the extent that we can, yet remain accountable.

Mr Merrin: I agree with Norm.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have no doubt that you would, and a lot of other groups probably would like to, as well, and also get their hand into the public pot. At the moment, you are not funded in a long-term kind of way, as you say. I am trying to figure out what the structural connection will be with the present accountable mechanisms that we have out there, which are primarily our boards of education in both systems at this stage, and whether you see a need for that kind of level of accountability, or is it just the programmatic accountability that you are talking about here?

Mr Meyers: We are talking about the programmatic accountability. I really cannot make a comment beyond that.

Mr Jackson: I have a supplementary. We have seen skills development or manpower retraining—if you will pardon the gender reference—go from Labour to Education, then to Skills Development, and now it seems to be going back to Education. It has federal involvement. I was impressed that you got Department of Employment and Immigration moneys for what essentially is a measuring tool on dropouts and attitudes and experiences, which the Ministry of Education is announcing.

To follow on Richard's question: Where do you feel is the most appropriate panel and where are you feeling most positive about directions? Obviously we have had several policy approach-

es being taken during KASE's life. I have been hearing briefs from you guys for several years now, very good briefs, but you have also seen the government go through various phases. Could you expand upon that a little more, in terms of where you think the natural and most helpful linkages really are?

Mr Meyers: I would not mind passing that to our chair.

Mr Merrin: That is a tough question. I am afraid I just cannot give you the answer right off the top of my head. I think I would have to think about that to give you the kind of answer you would be looking for. I am not trying to duck it; I just think I would need to think about it.

Mr Jackson: If there is time, you can come back to me and we might explore that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One angle I am trying to get at—I do not need an answer today on it—just looking at the whole question of accountability, earlier today somebody suggested that continuing education might become the purview of the community college system in terms of the co-ordination. Adult education, obviously, has some kind of connection as well to some of the things that KASE is doing. I guess I am just looking at new players on a long-term funding basis rather than adding new tiers of educational funding. Is there some way we can look at the kind of function you play within our present funding structures, whether through boards of education or whatever?

Ultimately the kinds of things you are doing—trying to get kids better prepared for apprenticeship programs, etc—can be seen to be the real responsibility of the education system and that you are filling gaps that are not being filled. Therefore, in terms of the funding mechanisms and accountabilities back and forth, both for failures, perhaps, of the system and for the good things you are doing, I am wondering if you want to look at those ways that we really need.

I would think that, rather than just doing it on an ad hoc basis with various employers' councils developing around the province, you might want to look at how it fits within the overall accountability structures we have at the moment.

Mr Merrin: Currently our funding comes directly through the boards of education to ourselves; therefore, we would be accountable to the boards. Personally, particularly when I have seen this new structure in terms of Ministry of Education skills development in community colleges, I guess I would prefer to see the funding come directly so that we were in a stronger

position to be a more independent voice and perhaps accountable back to that structure as opposed to a local school board. I just think we could operate more independently and perhaps voice our opinions a little more strongly if we had that kind of long-term independence.

The Chairman: I gather from that that you would measure your accountability by the outcomes from the student body and the results you achieve.

Mr Merrin: Yes.

The Chairman: What about financial accountability? How do you see that fitting in? You are talking programmatic accountability to a certain extent when you talk about outcomes of students' scores, but what about the financial accountability?

Mr Merrin: Again, I think that if we have programs, we get funding. We are obviously going to be supervised for that funding and would have to come up with some results, whatever this particular group would feel would be satisfactory.

The Chairman: But you would see that coming directly from the ministry as opposed to through a school board.

Mr Merrin: Yes.

The Chairman: We have Mr Keyes, and then I think Mr Jackson wanted to ask another question.

Mr Keyes: Maybe you could follow up, Norm or Jay, on the funding situation you have. With two boards behind you and backing you, I suppose you have to be careful how you speak to them today. I want to just look at the funding and how you see it in the future and then make a couple of ramblings.

I suppose your role as KASE is to try to work yourselves out of business in a sense, if the local boards react more positively to the needs of those students who are the at-risk students as far as employment is concerned. Would that be kind of a long-range goal? Then talk about the funding and maybe just what are your goals as KASE as far as the next year or two are concerned. There is lots of variety for you.

Mr Meyers: Thank you. Indeed, the boards of education are sitting behind us, and I am very comfortable being able to say anything. They have been tremendously supportive and continue to be so. One of the things that does concern us, though, is that they are under very real financial pressures. We certainly provide a very necessary role. I agree with you in that I hope our role is not always necessary, but it has been identified as

necessary by business, labour and the community at large here for the time being.

We have to compete, if you like, for that funding, notwithstanding the fact that the boards have been extremely supportive and want us to do what we are doing. But when push comes to shove, I believe there will still be programs that we need to do, that there is a definite need for; at that point in time, could we compete for some of the more high-profile programs that might be available?

Also we have to secure funding from the community, matching funding to some extent. The state of the finances as they are in the community may not always lend certain businesses to donating as they have in the past. Although we consider a portion of that kind of time certainly is necessary, a very large percentage of our time is spent simply trying to survive and we are living hand to mouth. Maybe we deserve to, but we think that in the present milieu, the way the situation is now, there is room for us.

We are providing a necessary role and will need to do that for some time. Then yes, I hope we do go out of business. But in the meantime we would like to be able to do that job as efficiently as we possibly can, and that is the point of our funding discussion.

1430

Mr Keyes: How about just extending what you see in the next year or two for KASE, programming-wise.

Mr Meyers: I will ask Mary-Gayle to speak to that. She has been very active in developing some directions.

Ms Dillon: When I joined KASE last winter, it was at a stage of regrouping, if I can use the term. They had developed a resource directory and, as you know, had initiated the adopt-a-school planning in Kingston. At the point I came, the active program standing committees had come up with a number of suggestions based on community input as to the needs of the students in the Kingston area.

The dignity of work, promoting the perception of the skilled trades, was very important, which as Norm indicated we have commenced. Another one was preapprenticeship, something for kids before they get to the point of having to decide on what to do; letting them know that it is out there. This also has come out of the schools as a need.

As to our role, things are not defined or proposals have not been actually completed other than a teacher intern proposal which is geared towards letting teachers have the experience of

going out into the workplace for a four- to six-month period in their particular subject areas in the hope of being able to operationalize the career component of the guidelines once they get back in the classroom, and hopefully this will be a benefit to the students.

All of the needs in programming are directly coming out of the educational system in Kingston. We respond to those needs accordingly. As for the future, the next couple of years, it again depends very much on what the needs of the area are.

Mr Jackson: I am very interested in several trends that I see emerging and how they affect employment advisory groups and groups that are more than just advisory—proactive in your instance. There are two I will identify and hope we will get a reaction from you.

First, there is the role of the federal government, which we have seen change with different administrations and different economies. I think it is fair to say that under the current federal regimen they are governed by two trends. One is that they move closest to areas of high unemployment with those dollars. I am not sure of the unemployment figures in this area, but certainly in my area they have not been as prevalent because there are other parts of the country. The other is to try to tie things to gross national product producing, like legitimate employment development as opposed to make-work type.

Those two trends have been positive, I think, but I sense there is a pull between the federal and provincial governments, one wanting just the dollars without the rules and the feds saying, "We'll give you dollars, but we have to have rules if we're going to follow a national economic strategy." I would like you to react to that because you are the beneficiary of some federal dollars as well as some provincial dollars.

The other trend, just for insight purposes, is the extent to which separate and public education impacts your mandate and how you might just enlighten the committee in some way. I have some very strong views as to where the government is going to go. The issue of a dual system does impact long-term objectives for life-long learning and manpower training, which really should not have much to do with what religion you are.

Could you comment on those two? One is a trend, and the other one may be an observation as to where we might go. I am trying to get back to my question to Jay in a circuitous way.

Mr Merrin: I think on the latter question, our experience in Kingston as a community-based

group is that the two systems have worked together very effectively and co-operatively. We see in our particular community that trend continuing and a great deal of co-operation. I think that would be a fair statement.

In terms of how the two systems would impact on our particular problem locally, there seems to be a great deal of willingness to co-operate with programs, sharing of ideas and that sort of thing.

Mr Jackson: But, if I might interrupt, that is because structurally your revenues come federally and from Skills Development. If we were to shift to Education, there might be some additional guidelines and rules associated in terms of client base and where programs are undertaken. I am speculating in that sense, but it strikes me that things can continue to go on in the comfortable way they are, given the structure we are working with; that is what you are telling me. I am trying to get you to move into the area of what it might mean if the ministry does move the Skills Development panels into Education. Maybe the simple answer is, people really have not given it that much thought.

Mr Merrin: From my understanding of it, it was not going to be a move into Education, it was going to be this new structure. As opposed to the Ministry of Education controlling skills, we would have a structure that would combine both of them. It would not be one taking over the other. I guess I saw it as a positive thing.

Mr Jackson: It still may be positive—do not get me wrong—but moving more into the school-board-based funding model. The province then can treat it like it is currently treating junior kindergarten, heritage languages or any other program. It can fund it partially from the local tax base—and in some instances predominantly from the local tax base—and to a lesser degree from grants. That is the context in which it could be moved in.

There are practical concerns if we go in that direction, but obviously the move to strengthen its relationship with Education is a positive move; it is just what that will mean to funding. That is really the area I was getting at. We do not know what it is going to be like until the ministry details its sense of vision in that area.

Mr Merrin: I do not think, as an organization, we have spent a lot of time, quite frankly, looking at that aspect of where the money comes from.

Mr Meyers: To answer the first part of the question, if there is time, the federal initiatives as I understand them and I think as we understand

them are generally geared to making work or creating employment. Our focus is much more on responding to community needs for the type of preparation that people have and with the quality of work that people get into. By quality of work, I think I qualified what that means, that all work is dignified. But I think our mandate and our work are aimed more at improving that transition rather than having it focused on creating work where there was not work before.

Ms Dillon: Also on the structure—and it is important in this context—while you are saying we get federal moneys, as indeed we do and have for this last project, this is a pilot project. If it becomes programming, it does not necessarily mean we get funding for this program.

The programs that exist, that KASE does now, were initially funded by somebody; however, we carry them on once that funding stops. We are in the precarious situation of having all these programs, and the first part of them was paid for and then you are on your own.

Unlike a school board, which is paid on a per capita basis, if we are funded by moneys from the ministry via the educational system, again because we have to contribute, it depends on the local economy; it depends on the local school boards grants as well.

I think our point is that there is not a consistent mechanism or any mechanism in place that would allow for an equal participation for program delivery.

Mr Jackson: I wish we had time to pursue it further. I realize we have run out of time, but I for one am concerned that there are certain federal agreements, which Ontario has not as yet signed, that other provinces have. One of the stumbling blocks, regardless of all the political rhetoric we are famous for as politicians, is the fact that the province is a majority shareholder in the contributions. If, however, the agreement is structured within the educational environment instead of the federal, so that moneys flow to the province and then those moneys are augmented by local tax dollars, then in theory the provincial coffers are insulated and local taxpayers are essentially paying for another educational program.

That is a trend I want to study very carefully. Everybody in the room supports your mandate and the good work you are doing, with the full support of the school boards. It is just how it will evolve and who will pay for it; that is what we in this committee are struggling with, advising the government of the day.

1440

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank KASE for its contribution to our committee today.

Our next delegation is from the Frontenac County Board of Education. Come forward, please. Welcome to our committee today. We heard from the county of Frontenac this morning, and they had some very interesting things to say, so we are now looking forward to round 2. Please identify yourselves individually for the purpose of Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

FRONTENAC COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Thompson: I will introduce the members of our future committee. First of all, sitting to my extreme left is Hugh Henderson, the vice-chairman of our board. To my left is John Cable, who is the superintendent of business services and treasurer, as indicated. I would also like to acknowledge John Bates, sitting behind us, and Claude Bordeleau, who are also represented on this brief. I am Lars Thompson, chairman of the board.

Perhaps I should ask your wishes. Do you wish our superintendent to read the document that he prepared with the help of the administrative staff, or do you wish him to highlight it for you?

The Chairman: You do have 30 minutes' total time for your presentation, including question time. You may divide that however you see fit. Your brief seems to be fairly brief, so you may just like to read it into the record.

Mr Thompson: I think that is what I will ask John Cable to do then. Since he was the major writer of this document, I will ask him to read it to you and then perhaps highlight it at the end with comments and then obviously questions.

Mr Cable: The Frontenac County Board of Education welcomes this opportunity to outline concerns we have about the funding of elementary and secondary school education in Ontario. These concerns and recommendations are included in four broad areas:

1. The 1989 level of funding: We are concerned that increases in the funding provided for ordinary operating expenditures are not enough to meet the cost of inflation.

2. The financial impact of legislative changes: New ministry initiatives have expanded our mandate and obligations. This has placed new demands on our budget at a time when our revenues are constrained.

3. The inequities of the mill rate equalization plan: The mill rate equalization plan no longer is

effective or fair since most board expenditures per pupil are now above ceilings.

4. Assessment equalization factors: Residential property assessment is not equalized to account for the effect of other types of assessment included in the calculation of these factors.

The 1989 level of funding: The total 1989 general legislative grant amount was announced as a 6.1 per cent increase from the total 1988 general legislative grant amount. This was a \$237.5-million increase. While a 6.1 per cent increase sounds generous, much of it was devoted to separate school funding, new initiatives and growth in enrolment. An analysis shows that the increase left to meet the inflation of ordinary operating costs was in reality only 1.4 per cent. Considering that inflation from 1988 to 1989 is in the range of five to six per cent, one can understand why local taxation for education increases from 1988 to 1989 was excessive.

Schedule A, attached, details the calculation used to determine the 1.4 per cent increase noted above. Of the \$237.5-million increase, \$7.7 million was for increased costs for the extension of separate school funding, \$84 million was to cover new throne speech initiatives, \$20.9 million was for other new educational programs and \$70.9 million was to cover the 1.96 per cent provincial enrolment growth, leaving \$54 million as the actual increase in funding to the general legislative grant base amount. When compared to the 1988 total general legislative grant base of \$3,891,700,000, it is an increase of 1.4 per cent.

It should be noted that even if a board were able to maintain spending within ceiling—maximum recognized ordinary expenditure—mill rates would have increased 5.5 per cent at the elementary school panel and 13.8 per cent at the secondary school panel, for a combined total of 9.1 per cent increase. The majority of school boards, however, spent more than the published recognized ordinary expenditure ceilings and therefore had mill rate increases far in excess of 9.1 per cent.

The financial impact of legislative changes: In addition to the impact of inflation on school board finances, a variety of external factors have had a negative financial impact on school boards. A list of some of these items is attached as schedule B. While some of these items individually do not have significant impact, their combined effect is a serious reduction in a school board's ability to provide quality programs.

For example, pay equity could cost the Frontenac County Board of Education as much as

\$1 million. The employee health tax, which has replaced OHIP premiums, will cost an additional \$800,000 for this board. For 1987 and 1988, the extension to funding of separate school boards has increased the tax burden on the public school ratepayers of Frontenac county by \$1,678,000. The change in the Ministry of Education cash flow policy has cost the Frontenac County Board of Education \$129,000 in additional interest charges since 1988.

The 1989 general legislative grant regulation detailed a new method of funding trainable retarded pupil programs. The change in methodology will result in an annual reduction in grants of \$195,000 to the Frontenac County Board of Education. The implementation of affirmative action-equal opportunity legislation, workplace hazardous materials information system occupational health and safety legislation, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as well as a variety of current ministry initiatives, have all increased demands on this board's budget at a time when its revenues are constrained.

Inequities of the mill rate equalization plan: The mill rate equalization plan is based on the principle of an equal revenue yield for an equal tax effort to fund the basic level of service recognized for grant purposes. Below grant ceilings, this means all boards have the same funds per pupil to spend for the same mill rates. On a per pupil basis, boards with a high assessment receive less provincial grant than boards with lower assessment.

This plan works well when expenditures are within ceilings, but it makes no provision for equalization of overceiling expenditures. In 1988, all but a small minority of boards in the province had to spend substantial amounts over ceiling. The assessment-wealthy boards find it much easier to raise the overceiling amounts than assessment-poor boards. In other words, there is an unequal revenue yield for the same tax effort.

Schedule C is an analysis of the Provincial Survey of School Boards' 1988 Estimates and Comparative Per Pupil Costs by Expenditure Function. This provincial document shows that only one board, the Manitoulin Board of Education, spends under ceiling at the elementary school level and only four boards spend under ceiling at the secondary level. Schedule C shows the average per pupil expenditure for each type of board listed in the survey.

Schedule D illustrates examples of two school boards that are identical in their enrolment, spending and recognized expenditure per pupil.

The only difference is that one board has three times the total equalized assessment of the other. Both boards spend 10 per cent over ordinary expenditure ceilings. The calculation shows that the impact on the board with lower assessment wealth is a 23 per cent higher mill rate. This substantial difference in mill rates is due entirely to the mill rate equalization plan's inability to equalize the tax effort required to fund overceiling expenditure.

A solution to this inequity is to provide realistic ceilings for per pupil recognized ordinary expenditures. Current per pupil recognized ordinary expenditures are not realistic when only five boards in the province are able to stay below the ceilings. It should be noted that these five boards have large grant weighting factors, and although their per pupil expenditures are below the ceilings, they do in fact spend as much as other boards per pupil.

Assessment equalization factors: One of the cornerstones of the mill rate equalization plan is the formula used to arrive at assessment equalization factors. The process of calculating these factors appears to be extremely complex and very poorly understood. It is this board's contention that these factors, while purporting to achieve equalization, in fact result in unequalization of taxes for school board purposes. The formula may equalize assessment among municipalities, but it does not provide equal levels of assessment for individual properties.

1450

The attached schedule E details the calculation for three municipalities and shows what happens to residential property assessment that has a raw assessment of \$100,000 and a market value of \$5 million in each municipality. If the factors actually worked, the equalized assessment of the residential property in each municipality should be the same because the raw assessment and market value are identical in each case.

The examples show clearly that assessment in the other classes of property can materially change the equalized assessment of residential properties. In municipality A, a residential property assessed at \$1,000 with a market value of \$50,000 will be taxed for school purposes on \$50,000. In municipalities B and C, however, a residential property with the same raw assessment and market value will be taxed for school purposes on \$62,500 and \$14,000 respectively.

If the equalized mill rate were the same for all properties, the total tax bill for each property would be materially different. This is exactly what happens within the jurisdiction of a school

board. This difference is due entirely to a flaw in the equalized assessment formula.

A solution to the problems with equalized assessment would be to adapt a system of province-wide market value assessment. This would eliminate the morass of calculations and eliminate the flaw in the formula. A move to market value assessment would also allow property owners to evaluate their property in relation to assessed value and to have some idea if the assessment is in fact correct. At the present time, this is impossible.

In conclusion, the Frontenac County Board of Education extends its congratulations to the province on the initiatives announced to address the need to rejuvenate our ageing schools: increased level of long-term capital funding.

We urge the province to give every consideration to initiatives and action in the following areas: (1) increase the level of financing for ordinary expenditures at least to the level of inflation; (2) provide funding beyond this base to meet the demands of new legislative initiatives; (3) establish realistic ceilings for per pupil ordinary expenditures; (4) adopt a province-wide system of market value assessment.

The Frontenac County Board of Education appreciates the opportunity to present its views on the financing of education to the select committee on education and would be prepared to answer questions.

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. I left Toronto to get away from the whole market value assessment issue and here I find I have been stabbed in the back by the Frontenac county board which wants it province-wide. I will try to be fair and impartial in spite of those comments.

Mr Keyes: We will react positively to their recommendations to the committee.

The Chairman: We will start with Mr Johnston, followed by Mrs O'Neill.

Mr R. F. Johnston: John Bates has left Toronto.

Mr Keyes: Why do you think he left?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just want to tell you that I think this is a wonderful brief. In fact, it could serve as a little briefing for every opposition member going into the House these days. It would be just a tremendous backgrounder for them all to have.

Mr Keyes: Do not be surprised to see it show up on 10 October.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Except for that one little sop to the government—

Mr Mahoney: Some of it is accurate, so you would not want to use it Richard.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The facts have never really got in my way before, as you know.

I want to say that the way you have done the tables and things is very useful, very clear and very helpful to the committee as we look at potential changes, but they beg some questions and one of them is the following: It strikes me that there is a flaw in the process about how ceilings are arrived at, and that is that the real experience of the boards, as you point out, is that everybody is over ceiling, or the five that are not have grants that compensate and basically put them over ceiling anyhow.

But the real experience of boards is not taken into account in the decision unilaterally taken by the Ministry of Education in terms of what the ceiling should be. Surely we need some sort of co-operatively arrived at ceiling to be developed. I wonder if you have given any thought at all to what that process could be. Obviously, the provincial government is going to want to have the final say in it, but the exclusion of boards from major input into that, it seems to me, is one of the flaws. It is not something that is regularly met about. For years, there was no change in the ceiling at all and then unilaterally the change is made.

Mr Thompson: If I may, I think it is often a question of letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing. If the left hand is the Treasurer and the right hand is policy-making, I would say they ought to shake hands before they put everything out on paper.

Just to give you a quick example, I know these are minor, but if you take the Ontario academic courses and the textbooks, you get OACs now in place; now the new policy is to provide the textbooks. It is a minor item, yet it has implications. We have dealt with over-21 trainable retarded students in our schools. The funding ends by the time they reach age 21. They remain in our school settings because it is the best we can come up with at the time. I am speaking of we as a community, not we as a school board. Yet we must finance them out of a different fund. So we went hat in hand to a different ministry, and it agreed to give us some money at least for one year.

I am saying let's somehow develop a network where the left hand does shake hands with the right hand and where financial implications of policy are carefully thought through and fairly put in place about the same time that the policy is advocated, required or mandated.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It strikes me that one of the principles we are looking at is accountability. It is very difficult to deal with the accountability question on the spending of a board going over ceiling, which is supposedly the responsibility of that local board, when in point of fact on the real basic needs required by the government, by what is either propagandizing in terms of senior kindergarten, for instance, or other matters, the reality is that ceiling.

I want to ask you, though, the other question that comes out of this. You want to go to market value assessment across the province and I say good luck. We have trouble getting the system that is being developed at the moment.

Mr Jackson: You will get two petitions for that one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. Again, there are some questions being begged here about the reliance on the residential property owner for a greater and greater share of the costs of education. We have had some specific presentations made, for instance, about cottage owners and the particular burden this places on those people who are expected now to be somehow much more affluent than the rest of society, even though that may not necessarily be the case.

You do not really deal with that matter very much in terms of the fact that we are down to about 45 per cent or so of the operating costs of education province-wide being assumed by the provincial government at this stage. I wonder if you have any comments about how you limit that continual retreat back to property tax, even if you move to an equalized market value assessment.

Mr Cable: I did not really address the market value assessment part. I felt that our presentation on the 1989 level of funding automatically meant that it would follow into 1990 and on. Certainly, to go back to the 60 per cent, I have been intrigued with the ministry's discussions recently where it has inserted the word "approved" rather than the cost. The word "approved" suddenly arrives and it is 60 per cent of the approved amount, rather than 60 per cent of the cost. Of course, all you have to do is lower the approval to get the 60 per cent. You do not have to add any money to it at all. So it is intriguing that one word makes a tremendous difference. They are almost there and if they lower the approved a little bit more, they will be there.

Mr Keyes: We are working on it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Now they ruin the teachers' pensions as well, of course, as I keep getting reminded.

Mr Henderson: In terms of reliance on municipal taxes for education finances, I am not familiar with what all the other provinces do, but I know that in Quebec they do not rely nearly as heavily on municipal taxes as we do in Ontario. But at the same time you have to realize that they have a higher sales tax rate and they have a higher income tax rate there. Obviously, that is a solution to it, but it also a political solution. That is the way I think we should be going.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On the \$195,000 you identified because of the change in the way trainable retarded individuals are now paid for in the school system, we would love to have a breakdown of how that has affected your board, if you can give it to us, why that change has resulted in that \$195,000 loss.

Mr Thompson: If I could comment very briefly on that, I am sure we could provide that. We have obviously had to do it to look at our implications. We have argued for quite a few years that Kingston attracts a special client beyond the norm. It is a penitentiary city, for example, and so on; I need not elaborate. But it is an attractive centre if you have a child who needs special care because there is a university and a community college and so on. I could go on and on. There is a psychiatric hospital as well.

To pretend that we all across Ontario can come up with a formula for trainable mentally retarded students automatically and then everybody gets the same slice is grossly unfair. I think there has to be a look at special cases, and that seems to be on the way out. It seems simpler and has less bookkeeping is needed to pretend we are all the same across the province. I do not think it is true.

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The Chairman: Mr Bates—

Mr Cable: He is the other rotund guy in the back.

The Chairman: I remember Bates from somewhere. Mr Cable, did you have a comment on that?

Mr Cable: Yes. The basic calculation is relatively simple. All we did was take the \$4,760 that we used to get for every trainable retarded pupil, multiply it by the number of TR pupils we have, set that off to one side, take the \$23 for every child we have now that you get for TR and multiply that by our total number of children and compare it. There is a \$195,000 difference. It is an easy one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How much of that is because of the difference in the region and how much is something that will now be happening

across the province in terms of boards being stung with this? Have you any ideas? Is it mostly here?

Mr Cable: Yes. We think the vast majority of it is because our incident rate of TR pupils is fairly high, which makes sense. We have very extensive hospitals and a whole pile of services. I know that if I had a child who needed special care, this would be one of the places I would come because it is provided, by the board as well, but also outside the board by hospitals and that type of thing.

Mrs O'Neill: I will begin with a supplementary to that. In your presentation, you talked about over-21s. Were they included in the previous calculations? You say now you have to put them into another category. I am wondering how you slotted the over-21s. As I understand it, that is not new in funding for trainable retarded pupils.

Mr Cable: That is correct. We have never included our over-21s as trainable retarded. Is that under section 73? I do not know. Leon Brumer will know what section of the act it is. There is one where you get a TR grant and another where you do not. They run right beside one another. No, we have not included that. We do our over-21s through regular grants. They are regular elementary pupils. But the TRs are strictly the children in our system who are 21 and under. We have a fair number of those.

Mrs O'Neill: You did say that you had changed the over-21s and had to change the slotting of it.

Mr Thompson: I think that was my comment as an incident of expense where we lose, but we retain. In other words, we lose financing, but we retain the student and provide a service. It is a conscious decision of the board, but it is a cost item. I was just trying to point out how the other ministry, which should be sharing that with us—we had to go to that ministry to get it to share in the cost of keeping those students in our schools. I was not trying to comment on the grant structure. I leave that up to our expert on grant structure.

Mrs O'Neill: There is another thing I would like to know a little bit more about. You say the change in the Ministry of Education's cash flow policy has affected your board. I thought that that was more accommodating now. Obviously, I do not have your way of looking at things. Could you tell me what the problem is with the cash flow now.

Mr Cable: In the cash flow process, when we finally revised estimates at the end of October, it

used to be that the grant base for payments would be adjusted to reflect any changes in the revised estimates for 1988 and 1989. That has been changed. It is just a policy decision that from now on, if your grant base is lower than it was when you filed your original estimates, you get on the new base. If it is higher, you do not get the difference. It is sort of win one, lose one, and we lost.

Our grant estimates at revised estimates were quite a bit higher. We had miscalculated on our enrolments. We picked up a lot more children in September 1988 than we had expected to get. We do not get a grant advance. They do not adjust the base until you file your financials, which is in April. The money you normally got in October, November and December is held back until April of the next year. As well as that, the grant—

Mrs O'Neill: Does it become retroactive at that point? I always felt that when you got pupils, you were accommodated through a grant structure for new pupils.

Mr Cable: You get the grant, but you do not get it in time. Where you normally would have got the grant advances all throughout the year, really—

Mrs O'Neill: After you revised your September statistics, you used to get them in October.

Mr Cable: Not now.

Mrs O'Neill: You are telling me you have to pass a new budget before you get them.

Mr Cable: No, you cannot get them, period. You do not get them until you file your financial statement which is in April.

Mrs O'Neill: Is it retroactive then?

Mr Cable: The grant is retroactive, but the interest of course is not.

The Chairman: If there are no other questions from members, I would like to thank the Frontenac County Board of Education for its presentation today. I know the opposition members are particularly delighted with your input.

Mr Mahoney: Could I just make one brief comment? My understanding is that 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the municipalities in this province have already gone to market value assessment under section 63. Most of the municipalities have shown the courage to do the right and fair thing. Some of the larger ones may come along in the near future.

Mr Keyes: I am sure she did not care for your input there.

The Chairman: Next time I will not allow the vice-chairman to have his two cents' worth. You

can tell we have battles within our own committee on some of these issues.

Our next presentation will be by the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Good afternoon; it is nice to welcome you back to our committee. I think the last time we saw you was in Ottawa, if I am not mistaken.

Mr Duffey: Thank you very much. That is correct.

The Chairman: We came close to home this time.

Mr Duffey: I am disappointed that we are here, though. I really thought Mr Keyes would have had us up to the General Wolfe for these meetings. The General Wolfe is a lovely little hotel across the water here.

The Chairman: We will second that recommendation for next time.

Mr Jackson: You missed your opportunity; I thought you would recommend these hearings take place in a couple of portables.

Mr Duffey: They are too full.

Mr Jackson: Right on. We have it on the record.

The Chairman: Just for the sake of Hansard, which is trying to record these proceedings and figure out who these people are, could you introduce your panel?

FRONTENAC-LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Duffey: I would love to do that. On my left I have the vice-chairman of our board, Bill Hurdling, and on my right I have the director of education of our board, Dr Gregory Cosgrove.

I would like to say at the outset that our board welcomes this opportunity to share some thoughts with the select committee concerning the funding of education. We hope that our remarks will be taken against the backdrop of some genuine appreciation on our part for what has been done over the years in terms of improving access to financial support for education for separate school boards by the government and by the legislation.

As a small Roman Catholic school board, our concerns and needs are not comparable to those of large urban boards with dramatically increasing enrolments. Our intention, therefore, in our brief remarks is to address the matters of particular local interest. It is not intended to be a technical brief. We are confident that presentations that deal with educational financing at a

technical level will be numerous and we will leave it to others to offer those.

We would like to revisit some funding issues raised with the Macdonald commission. There are, as well, continuing concerns regarding the financing of education that we would like to comment upon. Finally, with current and anticipated changes in funding mechanisms for education, potential new concerns have arisen which we would like to share with the select committee. We will attempt to offer some thoughts concerning the resolution of these difficulties.

A common theme in discussions between smaller boards such as ours and Ministry of Education officials has to do with the very real difficulty we have in raising local revenue for educational purposes. As members of the committee are no doubt aware, each dollar we spend on education is provided in part by the province through transfer payments and in part by local ratepayers. The provincial transfer payments are controlled by the government of the day. This we appreciate and understand.

The local contribution to education spending, however, is controlled by the capacity of the assessment base to generate revenues. Recently the equalized mill rates for ordinary expenditures in the province were increased by 10.65 per cent for the elementary panel and 19.35 per cent for the secondary panel. The result of these increases is that the local jurisdictions are required to obtain increasing amounts of financial support from the local assessment base to offset a reduction in the provincial transfer payments.

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Even with efforts to tighten up on spending, it is expected that many boards will be unable to avoid a year-end deficit. We would ask that the select committee encourage the Ministry of Education to recognize the reality of deficits and provide the necessary funding improvements in 1990 to allow boards to recover. When the local board is unable to raise municipal taxes in any significant way, the impact is that the board actually, even in times of modest growth, has less money with which to operate.

In order to achieve a balanced budget for the fiscal year 1989, our board was required to increase local taxes by 13.4 per cent. This was done after almost all discretionary spending by the board was reduced and our reserve funds were fully rolled into the revenue side of the budget. This means that while a balanced budget was submitted to the Ministry of Education, we did so at a political cost in terms of the distress of local ratepayers and a very real cost in terms of

loss of reserve dollars in our savings account, if you will.

The real impact of this loss will be felt in 1990 and in subsequent years. The local ratepayer will be asked to provide additional dollars to offset the loss of the reserve dollars, if the same level of educational programs and services is to be continued.

It is our hope that the problems for boards such as ours, with reduced opportunities to generate local revenue, will be further reviewed. In this regard, the select committee is encouraged to look at the statistics of the Ministry of Education wherein the per-student spending level of various boards is calculated. It becomes very clear very quickly that boards with access to greater local assessment can afford to spend, on any variety of programs, facilities and enhancements, many dollars beyond what the assessment-poor boards can.

The principle of equality of education, we believe, is compromised in those situations. When two boards serving the same jurisdiction can be \$800 to \$1,000 apart in the amount they spend on average for each pupil in the jurisdiction, the assessment-poor boards and their students are likely to be disadvantaged.

We appreciate that the Ministry of Education has undertaken to correct this matter in part through the introduction of legislation regarding the pooling of commercial and corporate assessment. This will, indeed, improve our circumstances over time. It is the hope of our board and the Catholic school community in Kingston, however, that the legislation that is finally approved and the regulations which flow from it will make the process straightforward and workable.

If, in the final format, the legislation related to pooling of assessment requires that the distribution of the commercial and corporate assessment dollars be based on the ratio between coterminous boards of residential and farm assessment, it is incumbent on the government to ensure that the information and support to boards from assessment offices around the province continue to be of high quality. For assessment-poor boards, every bit of additional local tax revenue is critical. We certainly do not propose that we should enjoy more than our share of such assessment. However, it would be unfortunate if, because of technical difficulties in the implementation of the sharing plan, disparities in access to the revenues resulted.

Another very real need for many boards, those in high-growth areas as well as many separate

school boards in communities across the province, is for improved facilities. The full promise of Bill 30 can never be realized until coterminous boards generally are able to offer to their constituents not necessarily fully comparable, but at least separate and adequate facilities for the delivery of a variety of programs.

Our system is enthusiastic about a recent capital allocation which has given us the opportunity to construct our first purpose-built Catholic high school. This enthusiasm is tempered by the fact that our two other Catholic high schools, one for French-speaking pupils and the other for English-speaking pupils, are in facilities inadequate to the expectations of the community for the delivery of quality education.

As do many others, we appreciate that the demands on the capital resources of the Ministry of Education are far beyond the ministry's ability to provide. However, we would encourage this select committee to review in some detail with appropriate staff in the Ministry of Education the procedures that are followed to arrive ultimately at a set of annual capital expenditure approvals.

We would ask that the committee encourage the Ministry of Education to build greater flexibility into the capital grant plan so that boards which offer innovative solutions to the facility difficulties will enjoy as enthusiastic a hearing as those who approach the ministry with more traditional requests for the building of new schools. As a practical example of this, we do appreciate that the Ministry of Education is looking at technological studies now in a more forward-thinking and creative way. Hopefully, the policy direction being taken will be supported by appropriate changes in the ways in which the Ministry of Education is prepared to finance the construction or renovation of technical study facilities. Here the select committee's endorsement would be welcome.

For many years the discrepancy which existed between elementary and secondary pupil ceilings was justified by virtue of the cost of such programs and in most instances the spread in salary costs between the elementary and the secondary panels. Such distinctions are no longer the case. A most reasonable argument substantiated by data could be mounted to suggest that for most boards, the per-pupil costs of elementary and secondary education are growing together. We would ask that the select committee give consideration to a recommended review of the ceiling differential practice by the Ministry of Education. We say this with the qualifier that the resolution of the discrepancy not be an increase

in the elementary ceiling with a corresponding reduction of the secondary ceiling.

Our recent experience with the approval of a budget which generated a significant increase in the requirement for local assessment has been educational. Of some particular distress to us were the situations in which retired, fixed-income school supporters found themselves. I know that many of our staff personally were faced with the difficult task of explaining to individuals why their tax bill had to be increased so significantly. In return, we were reminded of the financial realities of individuals in those situations.

Ontario pensioners' assistance grants are designed to help in these situations. They may not be sufficient. We would ask the select committee to recommend to government a review of legislation with a view to determining some means whereby retired, fixed-income taxpayers might enjoy some relief. We appreciate, if that were to happen, that the impact of such changes would reflect potentially on taxes paid for other government programs and services. Regarding that, we are unable to comment. Our concern is with the impact that our actions, however fiscally responsible we feel they are, have on individuals with limited financial resources.

In concluding our remarks, we would like to revisit with the select committee two issues indirectly related to the cost of education which we raised in a brief presented previously.

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We continue to be concerned about our seeming inability to define with any precision the mandate for school systems in the province. We are asked to respond to an increasing number of concerns through initiatives from government. Many of these deserve support and are appropriately addressed, in part, through education. Some financial assistance is usually made available. However they have many times hidden financial, personnel and time costs which boards find difficult to meet.

The costs of education are rising, in part, because of the requirement that school boards meet a broadening social policy agenda. If this is to continue, and the definition of education's responsibility is to be expanded, then the dollars necessary will have to flow. If this is not the case, then an eroding of the quality of education will result as time, energy and moneys are directed away from classrooms towards other initiatives. We believe that the comments we offered previously in this regard still apply, and the

appropriate section of our previous brief is appended to today's presentation.

The public's view is that there has been a decline in educational quality over the years. There is a belief held by numerous taxpayers that each year they pay more and get less—less value for their money, that is. Certainly it is the responsibility of school boards to work with parents and other ratepayers to confirm that local education is of high quality and relevance. However, in recent years the Ministry of Education has addressed the issue of accountability in a peripheral fashion. The possibility of provincial testing, as an example, enjoys intermittent public attention.

This system supports the introduction of accountability measures. The leadership of the Ministry of Education, though, is needed now. We must proceed in partnership rather than separately and possibly, as a result, along divergent courses. We believe Ontario citizens are prepared to pay for a first-class system of education. Together we must confirm and promote with them that such is the case now.

I conclude by saying again that we express to you and to your committee our appreciation for the opportunity to share these brief remarks. Public expectations for education continue to be high. The costs of financing systems to deliver on these expectations continue to grow. We do hope that the select committee will enjoy some success at addressing the relationship between the expectations and costs in a way in which the children and adolescents, who are our fundamental concern, will have their needs well and truly met.

Mrs O'Neill: One thing that has not been brought to our attention before, which I feel should certainly be a highlight from your brief, is the necessity for us as legislators, and certainly the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Revenue, to really make sure that the assessment offices are putting out very accurate data. I am glad you highlighted that because in the time of transition we are in, I think that is going to be more than fundamental. Thank you for doing that.

Mr Duffey: If I could just address that issue, it is not only public separate boards in this area now, but we have English-French, as you know, from the situation in Ottawa-Carleton. In my mind it is very important that we do and I thank you for raising that.

Mrs O'Neill: I want to go back to page 2, where you talked about your reserves. I just wondered if you can tell me a little bit about the

way in which your board has handled its reserves, whether you had guidelines for them and whether you had them designated for long-term purchases. You are suggesting now that you are going to have to look at those reserves in a different way. Could you say a little bit about past and future?

Mr Duffey: What has happened in the past is that, depending on the results of our budget process, we would put some money into our reserve fund. We would keep that money there if at all possible. What would happen, in many instances, is that we had to reduce that to keep the mill rate at an acceptable level with the community. I think we had, and I am only going by memory here, something like \$750,000 to \$800,000 in the reserve fund. Am I close? Yes, \$800,000.

What happened was that when we did our first process of our budget, we were going to have an increase in the mill rate of something like 30 per cent. That just was not possible, so we started to reduce some costs. We did that. We reduced all costs we could possibly reduce. We changed librarians, we did a few things of that nature. To do the technical academic situation, I would have to get the doctor to reply to that.

In essence what happened was that we had to take that \$800,000 and put it into the revenue side of our budget so we could come up with a reasonable—well, 13.4 per cent—increase in the local mill rate.

What happened was that although the ministry had indicated to us that in elementary school transfer payments were going to get a 5.1 per cent increase, when they increased our equalized mill rate by 10.65 per cent, what that in effect did was give us \$300,000 less in cash than what we had the previous year. So we had a reduction of \$300,000 in elementary school grants from the ministry.

Mrs O'Neill: You knew that was coming, though, did you not?

Mr Duffey: I did not know it was coming.

Mrs O'Neill: It was the second year of a phase-in. I am not trying to be facetious, I am trying to state a fact.

Mr Duffey: Sure, but it is always in the small print. We look at the 5.1 per cent and we think that is great. The 10.65 per cent of the equalized assessment was something I suspect we knew was there. Nevertheless, even though you know you are going to spend money, if you have not got it you cannot spend it.

Mrs O'Neill: That being said, I am glad you have complimented us on our technological initiatives. I hope you will be taking advantage of them, as I am sure you will be.

Mr Duffey: We surely hope to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I never had trouble spending money I never had. Of course, I am a socialist. What can I tell you? I thought I would get that out before somebody else did.

Mr Jackson: He will do it for the whole province if you let him.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly, just give me a chance.

One line of questions has already been put in terms of the kinds of sacrifices that had to be made as you made that adjustment and still had to cope with a 13 per cent increase, which made you very popular, I am sure.

The other one I would like to just pursue a little is in terms of the seniors' assistance, because I think that is something members are sensitive to. I am not sure what common ground we are going to find as a committee on where we should be going in terms of the relative role of property tax, anyway, in education. It may be that we cannot come up with a consensus on that, but perhaps an area that we might be looking at as a committee would be this area of assistance to home owners who are not particularly well off. Those would be primarily seniors on fixed incomes and others for whom, at the moment, there is not a very good formula. Correct me if I am wrong. The figure at the moment of the grant is \$600 maximum, right?

Mr Duffey: That is correct.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That was raised just recently, but it had not been raised, as I recall, since 1981, when it was moved to a \$500 fixed grant from an old sliding scale percentage approach, which, at that time—my memory is fading, but as a person who has been here for 11 years, and just realizing that I am the senior citizen in legislative experience of those on the committee, it is a little terrifying, I must tell you; for you as well, I am sure.

As I recall, the average at that stage was something like \$400-plus that people were receiving. I am wondering if it would not be possible for either somebody from the ministry or maybe our research people to look at what has happened in terms of the loss of value of the grants from that time, when it was on a sliding percentage scale. If we had maintained that approach, what would people be getting now versus what they are getting on the grants, and what would they be getting if the cost of living

had been put on to that grant versus now? In fact, what have been the increases in their local property taxes for education from that period to this period? Let's just see how big that gap is.

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If we had that statistical base, it may very well be that if we cannot come up with agreement on other kinds of things, a recommendation at least in trying to bring that into some realm of reality for those older people would be very useful. I am very pleased you highlighted that, because if we can do that kind of pursuit, looking for areas of consensus, we may actually find one in that realm.

The Chairman: Just before you continue, perhaps we could ask Mr Brumer if that material might be available from the ministry.

Mr Brumer: It is not available from the ministry.

The Chairman: Perhaps through the Ministry of Revenue?

Mr Brumer: Most likely, or the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I do not know which one would have that information.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Revenue.

The Chairman: I think it is Revenue.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Revenue will have it. It is very easily calculated once you have the base figure of the consumer price index for those years. There must be some kind of an average, I would think, for property taxes or we could take a couple of locations like Kingston, Toronto and a northern one, or something like that.

Mr Brumer: We can certainly correlate it to the grants in education.

The Chairman: If you could do that, and if we need additional material perhaps we could get it through Revenue.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That would be great. You were going to say something about that.

Mr Duffey: I was just going to say that it is a real issue with us because of the large increase we had. When people would talk to you about the cost of education and would say, "Well, my children are all finished in school," it was quite flippant to be able to say to them that some years ago, when it was not a real pile of money, "What you're paying is sort of retroactive for when you went to school." Two out of three of those calls that we had came from seniors who were coming into our board office and saying, "What is this?" It is a real problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other small question I have that I did not touch on was to do with lot

levies. What effect are lot levies going to have on a board like yours? Is there sufficient development that that is going to help you with some of your capital needs, or are most of your capital needs now in those buildings that you refer to in the brief?

Mr Duffey: I think we have some in both areas. We need new school construction as well as renovations to the two high schools I mentioned. But as far as the lot levies are concerned, I do not think we know an awful lot about it yet. We are hoping to meet with our coterminous boards, both the Lennox and Addington County Board of Education and the Frontenac County Board of Education, with at least some of their members, maybe their property committees, to get together so that we can study this thing together and form some kind of consensus on whether we agree or disagree.

To answer your question, our board has not yet made a decision one way or the other. Maybe the director would like to indicate some more to that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is too early to say. Okay, thank you.

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much for your contribution to our committee today.

Mr Duffey: It was a pleasure. Thank you.

The Chairman: Our final presentation this afternoon will be from the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Please be seated and make yourselves comfortable. Begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, and then you have 30 minutes of presentation time. We hope at least part of that can be reserved for questions by members. Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mr McNally: Thank you. I guess we are lacking a few members. In any event, if you want me to proceed I will.

The Chairman: Yes. Actually, two of our members have just gone to the airport and the other two are just coming back to their seats, so if you would like to proceed.

LANARK, LEEDS AND
GRENVILLE COUNTY ROMAN
CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr McNally: Madam Chairman, former trustees, current legislators, ladies and gentleman, on behalf of the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and its ratepayers, I wish to thank

this select committee for the opportunity to be here today and to make our presentation.

My name is Joe McNally. I am the chairman of the board. On my right is our director of education, Frank Musca. On my left is Tom Ariss, our superintendent of business.

Although we may be considered small in terms of student enrolment, our board's jurisdiction takes in a large geographical area. Our board extends from the outskirts of Ottawa to the St Lawrence River and from Gananoque on the west to Prescott to the east. Our largest urban centre is Brockville, with a population of 20,000 people. All of the other major centres are small towns with populations below 10,000, for instance, Smiths Falls at 9,000, Carleton Place at 6,000, Perth at 6,000. Kemptville, Almonte, Prescott and Gananoque each range from 4,000 to 5,000 in population.

Our board provides Catholic education to 4,000 elementary students and 500 secondary students. We are here today to solicit the legislative committee's support for the government's proposal to provide a fair and more equitable distribution of commercial and industrial assessment to Roman Catholic separate school boards.

As it currently operates, there is little equity in the financing of education in our jurisdiction. As a rural and assessment-poor board, the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville County Roman Catholic Separate School Board simply cannot match the expenditures of our two coterminous boards on a per pupil basis. The money available through the grant system is not sufficient to compensate our board, especially since over-the-ceiling expenditures must be covered entirely through local taxation. Educational opportunity in our three counties can never be equal until such time as our board has equal access to commercial and industrial assessment as our two coterminous school boards.

Let me illustrate to you how inequitable per pupil expenditures have been in our jurisdiction. On the table at the bottom of page 2, we will take the last line. In 1988, our separate school board's per pupil expenditure was \$3,228; the Lanark board, elementary, \$3,829. That is where the comparison was made and the differential, as you can see, is 18.6 per cent. And of course, the Leeds and Grenville County Board of Education, on a per pupil basis, was at \$3,733.

Expressed in other terms, over the past five years, our board has had on the average 12 per cent less money to spend on each of its students than the Lanark County Board of Education.

Why is this? Are our students 12 per cent less important? Can we expect our staff, teachers, secretaries, custodians and administrators to accept 12 per cent less in pay? Or do we cut out 12 per cent of our programs?

Our ratepayers do not accept this. They have a right to expect equal educational opportunities for their children. Let me illustrate this inequity with more shocking statistics. Table 2 indicates that our board educates approximately 17 per cent of all the students in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville and yet has access to only nine per cent of all assessment available in the three counties. A quick analysis indicates that although we educate 17 per cent of all students, our board receives approximately three per cent of the commercial and industrial assessment available.

1540

What all this means is that as the legislation now stands, for every \$100 raised by our board through local taxes at the same mill rate, the Lanark County Board of Education raises \$185 and the Leeds and Grenville County Board of Education raises \$356. Our mill rate is equal in terms of comparison.

The graph on page 4 indicates what I talked about in that last paragraph. If you take a quick look at it, you will see that the enrolment of 4,500 represents 17 per cent, and if you go over to this side of the third column, you will see that the commercial assessment is three per cent of the total of \$79,642,875.

In order to compensate for this large difference in the ability to fund educational programs, our board has had to do without services which other boards take for granted. For example:

(a) We do not provide industrial arts and families studies programs for our students.

(b) Our board office support staff has been kept to an absolute minimum.

(c) We have had to maintain part-time principals with classroom responsibilities.

(d) Our school libraries are staffed with skeletal staff where staff is available.

We have been able to maintain a good strong program because of the dedication and commitment of our entire staff. In this way we have been able to provide our students with the skills necessary to compete for university places at the various institutions across the province. I might add here that all of our students who graduated from St John's Secondary School and who applied to university this year were accepted.

As we know, there are greater demands being made on our staff and our resources: drug education, AIDS education, co-operative educa-

tion, computer education, full-day kindergarten and on and on. All of these programs demand a greater commitment on the part of our board in terms of our human and financial resources, a demand which can only be fulfilled with more revenue.

With a more equitable funding of education in our jurisdiction, our board will be able to provide and/or include all of these services. This is the reason why the government initiative to give our board an equitable share of the local corporate taxes is so vitally important to us.

As our board logo states, we truly believe that "The Successes of Tomorrow Begin Today," but let us ensure that our students today begin on an equal footing with other students in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. We applaud the government for taking this step in correcting an historical inequity and we strongly urge you, the committee, to support this fairer share of assessment in the province. We appreciate what has been done and we look forward with positive thoughts to what will be done. Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr McNally. We have several members who are interested in asking you questions so I am glad you left some time. We will start with Mr Johnston followed by Mrs O'Neill.

Mr McNally: I will attempt to answer the questions and the ones I cannot answer I will pass to our director or our keeper of the purse, Tom Ariss.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The only positive thing I can see about your restraint program is the part-time principals. I liked that idea a lot. A lot of students must, as well, but that is another matter. I think it does point out, though, the severe restrictions you are talking about, not small ones.

Therefore, I wanted to ask you, because your whole brief is based just on the proposal by the government as being roughed out now in this next little while around pooling, how confident are you that the moneys you will be receiving will make up the difference in the assessment base that you point out in your tables, and meet your real needs in terms of quality of education?

Mr McNally: I think I will let our director answer that.

Mr Musca: I would like to believe that the new legislation will give us the grants or the assessment. Of course, it is up to us now as a board, once the legislation is passed, to make sure that the residential and commercial assessment which should be directed to separate

schools will be directed to separate schools, so we have an awful lot of work to do once the legislation is passed.

In terms of programs, I believe we have good programs now; we have excellent programs now. As Mr McNally stated, this is mainly due to the dedication of our staff. We do not expect that to change at all. We expect that with more funds, we could improve some of the areas. For example, we could look at child care centres, which we presently do not have. There seems to be a need out there, but we certainly cannot afford to provide them at this point in time. When the province comes out with full-day kindergartens, we will not be ready for them. We do not have the facilities, we do not have the money, we do not have the staff. Hopefully, once the legislation is passed, we can take a second look at that. There are all kinds of things that we could do. We are confident that if the province passes the legislation, we can certainly improve on some of our programs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just wondered if you had done any work on trying to project whether or not you thought you were going to come up with the 17 per cent. Was it 17 per cent? Let me just see if I remember that correctly.

You educate 17 per cent. Do you think you are actually going to come up with approximately that percentage of the industrial-commercial assessment? Have you looked at that? If you came up with that, would that meet your problems around part-time principals, library deficiencies and those kinds of problems which you have already identified, forgetting the fact that you are not able to provide technical programs, for instance, at the secondary level, etc., at this stage? In other words, the full range of possibilities that we all talked about with Bill 30, is that going to be within your reach when you look at pooling, or are there other changes that would have to be involved in some of the other matters that presenters have been making to us today?

Mr Musca: We do not have a study. We have not conducted a study. I believe once the legislation is passed though, we will be fairly close to 17 per cent in terms of commercial and industrial assessment.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr McNally, I wondered if you would share with us how you had done this past year on the facilities grants for capital. How did your board fare?

Mr McNally: We fared quite well. In terms of capital grants, we have approximately \$11 million that we are receiving over the next few

years for a new high school in Perth and a new elementary school in Brockville.

Mrs O'Neill: Will both of those have the child care facilities as requested?

Mr McNally: Yes, there is a designated amount in both instances.

Mrs O'Neill: So you will be able to branch into that program in those two facilities?

Mr McNally: Yes.

Mr Jackson: You do not know your grant rate yet. Do you know the grant rate you are going to receive on those yet?

Mr McNally: In the secondary, we will receive 80 per cent?

Mr Ariss: That is correct, yes.

Mr McNally: And 85 per cent in the elementary.

Mrs O'Neill: Let me go to a different—or it could be related. I am very sorry that you do not provide industrial arts and family studies, since they happen to be pets of mine in the curriculum. I am wondering if you ever did provide those subjects. Have you provided those and now had to withdraw from their provision?

Mr McNally: No, we have not provided them. Maybe our director could elaborate on what happens.

Mr Musca: I am not aware that the programs were ever provided by our system. In order to establish a class of industrial arts, as you know, all the equipment and the facilities—first of all, we do not have the facility and we do not have the money to go into machine shops and so on. What we have done in the larger centres, we have been able to purchase some of these programs from the neighbouring boards. However, as their program expands, there is less time for our students. Presently, we do not offer it to any of our grade 7 or 8 students.

Mrs O'Neill: You do to some of your secondary students still?

Mr Musca: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you intend to take advantage of some of the new grants for technological studies and updating of those kinds of curriculum facilities in your new secondary school?

Mr Musca: We would hope that our new secondary school will have a shop section, not necessarily as we know it traditionally, but some area where technical studies will be studied.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope you will continue think about this area as one of those that you would like to branch into.

Mr Musca: Yes.

1550

The Chairman: Thank you, Mrs O'Neill. Mr Johnston has one final question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Your present residential assessment percentage is 12 per cent, so at this stage it does not reflect the actual enrolment in and of itself. I am wondering whether when you look at that, your total percentage at nine per cent of the overall at this stage, if you still think the 17 per cent is likely or whether it is likely to be closer to your 12, which you have now for residential.

Mr Musca: I really cannot comment, Mr Johnston, because we really have not gone and done a study on the total figures that you see before you. We just have not had the opportunity at this time to cost it out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just interested to know, and maybe later on as you do get the figures as the legislation comes through this fall etc, and you work it through, if you start to notice a discrepancy between enrolment versus percentage of the gross assessment that you are getting, would you let the clerk or the chair know and that can be passed around to members. I realize you are in an awkward position now to answer that.

The other thing I wanted to know was about cottages. What level of your residential ratepayers are cottagers in this kind of a district? Any idea?

Mr Ariss: I do not really have an idea at this time, but I would think that there are maybe 10 to 15 per cent of our ratepayers. Frank, does that sound reasonable to you?

Mr Musca: I cannot comment on that. I am sorry. We do have a large cottage industry, but I cannot give you a figure.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The reason I raise that is when Dr Macdonald was before us, and a couple of other people as well, he raised the significant problem that cottage owners are now starting to face as the property tax rises for them in two places instead of one. There is a presumption of wealth that Dr Macdonald did not think was necessarily there for people who had cottages in their families for years and years, etc. I was just wondering, if there were changes made in terms of cottages, residential rural in terms of the assessment, what kind of impact that might have on an area such as yours which has a fairly large cottage population at some times of the year.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr McNally, both to you and your colleagues. I am sorry, Mr Villeneuve has one more question.

Mr Villeneuve: Yes, I noticed you had 500 students at the secondary level. How many schools would they be in?

Mr McNally: There are two. We have started a high school in Brockville and we have St John's Secondary School in Perth which had grades 9 and 10 from the 1950s and we have, of course, extended it to grade 13.

Mr Villeneuve: Do you see an expansion in numbers here in the next couple of years?

Mr McNally: Yes, we are looking at possibly up to 900 students within the next—

Mr Villeneuve: This is again, in two schools—

Mr McNally: Yes.

Mr Villeneuve: —which would make it considerably more realistic to fund different programs that seem to be not there at present. On the lot levy business I know you are in area very similar to the area I represent. As a matter of fact, part of Grenville county is in the riding I represent. Could you comment on lot levies?

Mr McNally: Yes, I could if I saw the bill. No, I honestly do not have any comments on it now. We have a committee that functions quite regularly with our coterminous boards, the Lanark board and the Leeds-Grenville board. It has been touched on at those meetings, but I do not think anything very solid has come out of it to my knowledge. I am not at all those meetings and maybe I should not be saying this, but to my knowledge I do not think there is anything worth talking about at this stage.

Mr Villeneuve: As a final question, would you see any realistic application of sharing facilities with the public system?

Mr McNally: That is something that to this point we have not partaken in.

Mr Villeneuve: Would you consider it as a possible solution, a situation that you would consider, should it come forth?

Mr McNally: No, to be quite frank about it I have never considered it.

The Chairman: Thanks Mr Villeneuve and I will try once more to thank you. You are getting thanked more times for your presentation. It was excellent and we very much appreciate your input, particularly your focus on the sharing of commercial-industrial assessment and what it will mean for your particular board, so thank you very much for participating.

Mr McNally: Thank you, Madam Chairman and to your committee.

The Chairman: That winds up this session of the select committee on education. Before we

move on to Ottawa this evening I would mention to members that the taxis will be at the front door of the hotel at 6:15 tonight and our train is leaving for Ottawa at 6:41 pm. So, could you make sure you are down to the lobby by 6:15 at the latest.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10:00 tomorrow morning in Ottawa.

The committee adjourned at 1556.

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Ariss, Tom, Superintendent of Business



No. E-7

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Financement du système scolaire



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 19 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 19 September 1989

EDUCATION FINANCING

(continued)

FINANCEMENT DU SYSTÈME SCOLAIRE (suite)

The committee met at 1005 in Provinces I Ballroom, Hotel Westin, Ottawa.

The Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue our travels across the province. We are very pleased to be in Ottawa. Before I go on as to the mandate of the committee and introduce our first delegation, I believe Mr Johnston has a point of order.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not want to take up any of your time at the moment, but I wanted to thank the ministry officials for the small amount of information that they provided us, 10 or 12 pounds of it, around the various questions that have been raised. I wondered when we would get a chance to discuss this further. Maybe not all members have received it; sorry.

Mr Jackson: No, only the critics.

Mrs O'Neill: Only the critics and the chairman.

The Chairman: There were only three copies brought to Ottawa since, as you know, it was voluminous.

Mr Jackson: Harold would have had a hernia if he had brought all of them.

The Chairman: That is right. We thought perhaps we could discuss this when we go back to Toronto on Thursday. At that stage, the clerk does have a copy for each member of the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One thing I would like would be to give the ministry, maybe in writing, some follow-up questions I have from the material that I have now had a chance to go through, because I think, as always, it raises as many questions as it answers. That would be a good plan.

The Chairman: Mr Johnston, Mr Jackson and Mr Mahoney each has a copy of the material. If there are any questions you have in advance, I am sure the ministry would be pleased to receive them and possibly some of those answers might be available for us on Thursday.

As I say, we are quite pleased to be in Ottawa as we are starting our travels. As most people are aware, our committee on education is looking at the various aspects of financing of the elementary and secondary system in Ontario. We are particularly looking at the future of education financing relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of both operating and capital finances.

Notre comité est très honoré de visiter Ottawa. Nous accueillons aujourd'hui plusieurs groupes qui vont faire leur présentation en français. Le premier groupe est l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario.

If you could come forward please.

Je vous demande d'excuser ma prononciation française. Dans l'intérêt de tout le monde aujourd'hui, je continuerai en anglais.

Anyway, that was your penance for this morning—having to tolerate my very poor French—but I do want to bid you welcome to the committee. We are very much looking forward to your presentation today. For not only members but for people in the audience, I would mention that we do have translation today. If you do require it, please avail yourselves of a set.

We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, which we hope will include some time for questions from the members. Please begin whenever you are ready, and just start by introducing yourself for the purpose of Hansard.

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO

Mme Soucie : Il fait plaisir à l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario d'être ici pour présenter son mémoire. Mon nom est Rolande Soucie ; je suis présidente générale de l'ACFO. A ma droite, la vice-présidente de notre association représentant les membres affiliés, Jocelyne Ladouceur. A l'extrême droite, un membre de notre bureau de direction, Jean-Charles Landry. A ma gauche, Sylvie Lépine, agente de liaison à l'ACFO.

Je vais lire rapidement notre mémoire, en espérant que les gens pourront me suivre assez facilement — en voulant, moi aussi justement, donner l'occasion aux membres du comité de nous poser des questions.

L'ACFO est heureuse d'avoir l'occasion de présenter aux membres du Comité spécial sur l'éducation de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario ses commentaires sur l'avenir du financement de l'éducation et la répartition équitable, l'utilisation et l'importance des frais de fonctionnement et d'immobilisation.

Nous avons pris connaissance du document publié en mars 1989 par le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario intitulé « Le financement de l'éducation en Ontario : Règlement de 1989 sur les subventions générales, accompagné d'une description du modèle de financement de l'éducation ». Nous sommes d'accord avec le principe selon lequel tous les conseils scolaires doivent disposer de ressources financières équitables pour fournir des services et des programmes éducatifs de base.

Nous appuyons les objectifs du gouvernement en faveur d'une répartition équitable des ressources entre les conseils scolaires, mais nous précisons que le gouvernement doit voir à une répartition équitable des ressources non seulement entre conseils scolaires, mais aussi entre anglophones et francophones actuellement regroupés au sein d'un même conseil scolaire.

Le droit conféré par l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, ainsi que l'effet remédiateur de cet article, permettent à la minorité de revendiquer une évolution du système scolaire vers les exigences de cette nouvelle réalité constitutionnelle.

1010

I am sorry, is the translation working?

The Chairman: It is, except for our research-er. If you would excuse us for just one moment, please continue.

Mme Soucie : Les fonds publics devront dorénavant être partagés selon une nouvelle formule. En effet, plusieurs nouveaux conseils scolaires de langue française devront être créés ; ailleurs, les sections de langue française au sein des conseils scolaires publics ou séparés ne pourront plus être négligées quant au financement. La minorité linguistique ne devra plus être défavorisée financièrement à l'intérieur d'un conseil scolaire servant les deux groupes linguistiques. L'enseignement en langue française devra maintenant avoir droit à sa juste part des fonds publics.

Dans ce mémoire, nous allons traiter les points suivants : le droit conféré par l'article 23 de la Charte, le financement adéquat qui découle de ce droit précité, les injustices présentes à l'égard du financement actuel des conseils et finalement les

résultats du manque d'action adéquate de la part des législateurs.

Le droit découlant de l'article 23 de la Charte : Les dispositions de cet article stipulent notamment que les établissements d'enseignement de la minorité linguistique doivent être financés à même les fonds publics. Les garanties constitutionnelles reconnues aux francophones de l'Ontario font en sorte que ceux-ci ont droit à l'obtention d'écoles primaires et secondaires publiques de langue française ou, en raison de leur foi, d'écoles primaires et secondaires séparées de langue française. Le Comité spécial devra garder cette réalité de deux systèmes scolaires en vue quand il proposera une politique de financement plus équitable.

Aux fins de ce mémoire, aucune distinction ne sera faite entre les conseils publics et séparés, puisque les droits conférés impliquent un financement équitable dans l'un et l'autre cas afin d'offrir un service éducatif de qualité. L'accent sera plutôt mis sur les attentes de la minorité face aux mesures discriminatoires institutionnalisées et sur l'effet potentiel de la reconnaissance, par les divers tribunaux, de son droit à l'éducation et du financement qui en découle.

Afin de préciser quel est ce droit conféré par l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, on peut se référer à la décision du juge Jean-Charles Sirois de la Cour suprême de l'Ontario dans la cause *Marchand c. le Conseil scolaire de Simcoe*, où il énumère clairement l'envergure de ce droit à un service équitable pour la minorité. A cet égard, il dit et je cite :

« A partir des principes clairement énoncés dans ces deux arrêts, je dois conclure que le demandeur a le droit de faire instruire ses enfants en français et que cette instruction doit être financée sur les fonds publics. Il s'agit donc de la même instruction que celle dispensée à la majorité, mais dans l'autre langue officielle.

« Il s'agit d'une instruction totale et complète et non pas d'une instruction limitée, partielle ou tronquée, ce qui serait nécessairement une instruction de qualité inférieure, une instruction de seconde classe.

« Le coût de l'instruction dispensée à la majorité constitue aussi un facteur pertinent, mais ce facteur ne doit prendre ni plus ni moins d'importance que le coût de l'instruction dispensée à la minorité. Le coût constitue un facteur également limitatif pour les deux groupes.

« Aussi longtemps que la qualité de l'instruction dispensée à la minorité est équivalente à celle dispensée à la majorité, on peut dire que les

droits constitutionnels de la minorité sont respectés. »

Le financement adéquat : En établissant un nouveau système de financement scolaire, l'Ontario doit se garder de faire ce qui reviendrait à un nivellement par le bas, c'est-à-dire de diminuer la qualité des services éducatifs dans un réseau scolaire pour corriger une situation historique subie dans l'autre réseau. L'ACFO maintient que les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, tant ceux et celles qui sont contribuables aux écoles publiques que ceux et celles qui sont contribuables aux écoles séparées, ont un droit constitutionnel à des services éducatifs de qualité similaire à ce qui existe dans les écoles de langue anglaise.

Les principes que nous défendons sont clairs. Les personnes qui choisissent les écoles de langue française publiques ou séparées ne devraient pas être pénalisées, tant du point de vue de la qualité des services que du point de vue du financement. Puisque ce droit aux services égaux est maintenant reconnu, le devoir du législateur est de légiférer en fonction de ces droits ; en fait, ce rôle fait partie intégrante du contrat social entre le gouvernement et les gouvernés.

Par contre, si le gouvernement ne corrige pas de façon statutaire les inégalités actuelles, on peut prévoir qu'il y aura d'autres contestations judiciaires. Le législateur devrait prendre note du conseil énoncé par la Cour d'appel dans le renvoi de l'affaire de la Loi sur l'éducation de l'Ontario, où la Cour d'appel dit et je cite : « Les droits des minorités linguistiques devraient être établis par des lois générales garantissant à tous un traitement égal et juste, plutôt que par contestation judiciaire. »

Afin de déterminer ce qui est du financement adéquat, le critère primordial est celui de services égaux. La répartition des fonds ne sera juste que lorsqu'on aura satisfait au critère des services égaux ; il faut se rendre compte que toute autre répartition serait discriminatoire. Par exemple, il serait injuste de répartir les fonds uniquement sur une base au prorata sans considérer le service disponible avec les fonds octroyés.

Une autre considération importante est l'effet négatif à long terme que la discrimination a eu sur l'infrastructure en matière d'éducation disponible à la minorité francophone. Lors de la création de nouveaux conseils scolaires de langue française et de l'aménagement adéquat des conseils en existence, il s'avère essentiel de pondérer les énormes coûts qui devront être encourus, tels que les coûts immobiliers, les équipements spécialisés et autres coûts de rattrapage.

Le service égal doit aussi prendre en considération les disparités régionales. De fait, les centres urbains génèrent une évaluation foncière beaucoup plus élevée que les régions rurales. L'ACFO favorise une répartition provinciale des revenus provenant des taxes industrielles et commerciales. Cette répartition ne devrait pas se faire sur une base d'évaluation résidentielle ou sur une base au prorata des élèves (ce qui, dans les deux cas, serait défavorable à la minorité francophone), mais sur une base des listes de contribuables dressées à la suite d'un recensement adéquat. A ce sujet, il est tellement évident que le recensement de 1988 était déficient que la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario a jugé nécessaire d'ordonner le vote à double majorité pour les sujets relevant de l'ensemble d'un conseil scolaire et ce, dans six zones scolaires de l'Ontario où il était clair que les résultats de ce recensement défavorisaient la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Les discriminations structurelles : Les présentes dispositions législatives sur le financement scolaire sont injustes à l'égard des francophones contribuables aux écoles publiques, et encore plus injustes à l'égard des francophones contribuables aux écoles séparées.

La situation quant à ces derniers a souvent été dénoncée. Sans vouloir être exhaustif, voici deux exemples de discrimination que doit subir la minorité : un système injuste d'impôt foncier et le montant de base par élève.

L'impôt foncier est la base de financement pour les conseils scolaires. Les conseils séparés font face à un mécanisme légiféré qui les prive d'une part des revenus qui leur serait légitimement dus. La façon dont l'impôt foncier est partagé crée une discrimination envers plusieurs contribuables aux écoles séparées. Parmi les contribuables qui ne peuvent verser leur impôt foncier aux institutions scolaires de leur choix, il y a notamment les corporations, dont la proportion d'actionnaires catholiques ne peut être établie, et les individus qui ne donnent pas un avis conforme aux règlements. De plus, la communauté francophone devrait bénéficier d'une part des subventions versées par les gouvernements en compensation de taxes.

L'auteur George Weir démontre clairement, dans *The Separate School Question in Canada*, les injustices causées par ce mécanisme de discrimination des fonds provenant des impôts fonciers :

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« According to section 65 of the Ontario Separate School Act, a corporation may...

require a part of its property and business to be rated and assessed for separate school purposes. There is nothing mandatory about this provision... The above section appears to be somewhat defective in its application to mixed companies whose shareholders are partly Protestant and partly Roman Catholic...

« In point of fact, taxes collected from the majority of mixed companies in Ontario are available only for public school purposes... An amendment to Section 65 above, similar to that introduced in Saskatchewan in 1913, would probably remove the prejudice to which separate school supporters in Ontario consider themselves subjected as a result of the practical working out of the permissive clause now in the Act... »

« Moreover, Section 65 of the Ontario act makes no reference to public utilities, municipal or provincial, of which separate school supporters, along with other ratepayers, are owners. Roman Catholics... separate school supporters in Ontario, therefore, are deprived of any share of public utility assessments... There is indeed a lurking suspicion in the minds of not a few impartial observers in Ontario that sectarian prejudice has been largely responsible for the continuance of a condition that deprives separate schools of a fair share of the taxes of corporations and public utilities. As a result of the actual working out of Section 65, it seems inevitable that the tax rate for separate schools, especially in the larger industrial areas, should be considerably higher than the rate for public schools... The continuance of the present discriminatory condition in the allotment of public utility and corporation taxes would appear neither fair to separate schools nor in the public interest. »

Il est à noter que cette opinion de M. Weir date de 1934 et il faut avouer que certaines démarches entreprises par le gouvernement ont effectivement réduit certaines injustices. En effet, le mode de financement mis en vigueur par le gouvernement de l'ancien premier ministre John Robarts est un exemple d'amélioration du système de financement.

Par contre, il incombe à votre comité de considérer les nombreuses barrières discriminatoires qui existent encore dans les lois, les règlements ou des pratiques courantes et de recommander l'élimination de ces obstacles.

Le règlement de 1989 sur les subventions générales prévoit que le financement octroyé sous forme de montant de base par élève représente 58 pour cent du budget ; cette formule de financement est en soi discriminatoire. Il est possible de démontrer que le coût des services

scolaires aux francophones est plus élevé que le coût des mêmes services aux anglophones. Deuxièmement, le droit à l'éducation tel qu'interprété par la jurisprudence ne limite pas l'utilisation des fonds publics à un financement au prorata. Ce schéma ne prend pas en considération les besoins réels des conseils scolaires.

En matière de financement adéquat des établissements d'enseignement de langue française, l'Ontario a un retard considérable à rattraper. En fait, notre province a tellement tardé à agir selon les responsabilités constitutionnelles qui lui incombent depuis 1982 qu'un groupe de francophones de la région de Cornwall s'appête à recourir au tribunal pour obtenir réparation à cette violation de ses droits constitutionnels.

Une action a aussi été intentée par un citoyen de la région de la capitale nationale, en raison du fait que certaines dispositions de la Loi de 1988 sur le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton n'assurent pas un financement équitable des établissements de ce conseil scolaire. Ce citoyen fera plus tard cet avant-midi une présentation devant le comité, d'ailleurs.

À la suite de la proclamation de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982, plusieurs personnes se sont élevées contre le fait que les élus du peuple avaient confié d'importants pouvoirs à des juges. Lorsqu'il y a violation ou négation de droits et libertés, le tribunal peut en effet accorder la réparation qu'il estime convenable et juste, eu égard aux circonstances. Mais il revient aux législateurs de ne pas tolérer de situations évidentes de violation ou de négation des droits et libertés et d'éviter ainsi de longs litiges devant les tribunaux.

Nous aurions cru que le jugement unanime rendu en juin 1984 par la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne la gestion des écoles franco-ontariennes, et les deux décisions du juge Jean-Charles Sirois de la Cour suprême de l'Ontario quant au financement équitable d'un établissement d'enseignement pour les francophones du comté de Simcoe, auraient suffi et qu'il n'y aurait pas lieu pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes d'avoir de nouveau recours aux tribunaux pour faire respecter leurs droits.

Par le biais des membres de votre comité, l'ACFO invite donc les législateurs ontariens à modifier dans des délais raisonnables les lois de notre province, qui n'assurent pas à l'heure actuelle un financement équitable des établissements scolaires franco-ontariens. Cet appel au leadership vise à faire en sorte d'éviter, tant à la communauté franco-ontarienne qu'au gouverne-

ment, les frais élevés de recours aux tribunaux. Le financement scolaire équitable n'est pas un problème obscur nécessitant une interprétation de la part de magistrats. C'est un sujet qui a fait l'objet de nombreuses recherches au cours des années. Le problème a été clairement identifié ; il revient au gouvernement d'agir d'une façon juste et équitable.

Le plus haut tribunal du Canada a indiqué que les droits et libertés énumérés dans la Charte doivent être interprétés d'une façon large et libérale. Nous souhaitons vivement que l'action du gouvernement de l'Ontario s'inscrive dans cette optique. Nous nous inquiétons de l'influence que pourraient avoir auprès du gouvernement des avis qui ne cadreraient pas avec cette optique. Par exemple, voici un extrait de l'allocution prononcée au printemps 1989 par le principal conseiller en matière constitutionnelle du gouvernement ontarien, à une rencontre nationale organisée par l'Association du Barreau canadien :

« The argument in favour of separate boards to manage and control French-language education is based on logic and implication. Section 23 says nothing expressly about management and control. It is pointed out, however, that the publicly financed educational system has always been managed and controlled locally by trustees elected by the local users of the system. Indeed, this was the system adopted in the interests of denominational education.

« The principle of equality is invoked here as well: if independent school boards were regarded as essential to ensure the integrity of denominational education, no less can be accepted as essential to ensure the integrity of minority-language education. Finally, it is argued that only in this way can section 23, as a remedial provision, be given a broad and generous interpretation.

« The above arguments tend to discount as irrelevant the fact that section 23 is an overlay on developed educational systems throughout Canada. Very substantial adjustments and dislocations may be required in order to accommodate the section 23 rights. In a province like Ontario, where separate denominational schools are guaranteed by the Constitution, the potential for harmful disruption of the established pattern is enormous. Is it reasonable to assume that the legislators could have intended that section 23 should have such effect? »

And you will note that the author of these words is Mr John Cavarzan.

Lors de son allocution, le fonctionnaire a pris soin d'indiquer que les opinions qu'il présentait étaient les siennes et n'engageaient ni le ministère du Procureur général, ni le gouvernement de l'Ontario. Il y a lieu de souligner toutefois que le sujet que le fonctionnaire avait accepté d'aborder était le point de vue du gouvernement provincial quant aux droits à l'instruction dans la langue de la minorité.

Ce qui nous laisse perplexes dans la pensée constitutionnelle de ce fonctionnaire, c'est la mise en doute de l'effet remédiateur de l'article 23 de la Charte. Les francophones de l'Ontario doivent-ils renoncer à exercer intégralement leurs droits constitutionnels, y compris leur droit à un financement scolaire équitable, parce que la mise en oeuvre de ces droits changerait grandement le statu quo ? Afin de refuter les doutes des personnes qui invoquent la pertinence du statu quo, il faut comprendre l'effet remédiateur de l'article 23 de la Charte pour combattre une telle inertie ; la jurisprudence est claire à cet égard.

Par ailleurs, l'ACFO a pris connaissance des intentions gouvernementales énoncées à l'Assemblée législative le 18 mai 1989 par le ministre de l'Éducation quant au partage des taxes commerciales et industrielles. Nous nous réjouissons de constater que le gouvernement s'engage dans la bonne direction. Nous demandons aux membres de votre comité de travailler en faveur de l'adoption, dans des délais raisonnables, de modifications nécessaires aux lois qui ont présentement des dispositions non conformes aux droits constitutionnels des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes à un financement scolaire équitable.

A quoi bon des droits constitutionnels à l'éducation pour la minorité, si les personnes qui exercent ces droits sont pénalisées par le gouvernement et les conseils scolaires, qui refusent de financer adéquatement les services découlant de ce droit inaliénable ? A vous de répondre.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M^{me} Soucie. Nous avons sept minutes pour des questions des députés. M. Villeneuve, puis M^{me} O'Neill.

M. Villeneuve : Merci bien, M^{me} Soucie, ainsi que les représentants de l'AFCO. Vous avez mis l'accent précisément où il devrait être : au sein du gouvernement de répartir les fonds d'une façon équitable. A la page 7, vous faites le commentaire : « l'AFCO favorise une répartition provinciale des revenus provenant des taxes industrielles et commerciales. »

Comme vous le savez, il nous a été suggéré d'avoir un réservoir de fonds communs basé sur

un remaniement du système actuel. D'après ce que vous pouvez voir jusqu'à date, pourriez-vous faire des commentaires de ce côté-là, parce que le comité s'engage à établir un nouveau système pour percevoir la taxe ? Vous avez mis l'accent sur le fait que, une fois la taxe perçue, vous voulez que le financement des écoles françaises soit équitable.

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Le mandat du comité est aussi de décider de quelle façon aller percevoir les fonds si on change complètement la façon dont nous l'avons fait dans le passé. Alors, pourriez-vous nous faire quelques commentaires, surtout du côté de la taxe industrielle et commerciale ?

Mme Soucie : Nous nous sommes assez peu penchés sur le prélèvement de la taxe comme telle. C'est beaucoup plus la redistribution de cette taxe qui nous préoccupe, et ce que nous favorisons à l'ACFO, c'est que la répartition se fasse sur une échelle provinciale plutôt que régionale, afin de ne pas défavoriser les régions qui ont bien sûr une base insuffisante par rapport aux régions de grands centres industriels et commerciaux de la province.

Cela nous apparaît beaucoup plus équitable. Pour ce qui est de la façon de définir les sommes qui devraient être allouées à un conseil scolaire ou à un autre, là-dessus nous favorisons une répartition non seulement selon l'évaluation résidentielle — parce qu'on sait très bien que pour les francophones, ça défavorise une communauté qui au point de vue revenus, scolarisation, etc. est identifiée comme étant défavorisée par rapport à la société ontarienne globale.

Donc, il nous apparaît plus juste d'y aller par le recensement, parce qu'on ne veut évidemment pas exclure tous les parents qui n'ont pas d'enfants dans le système scolaire et qui voudraient s'identifier à la communauté franco-ontarienne. Alors, dans ce sens-là, ce sont là les recommandations que nous aimerions faire au comité.

M. Villeneuve : Alors, vous indiquez à notre comité, si je vous comprends bien, que vous aimeriez que le financement de notre système scolaire se fasse entièrement au niveau provincial, sans tenir compte de la taxe foncière—

Mme Soucie : Non. Vous m'avez mal comprise ou je ne me suis pas exprimée assez clairement; ceci pour la répartition de la taxe industrielle et commerciale seulement.

M. Villeneuve : Seulement. Merci.

Mrs O'Neill : Madame Soucie, perhaps you would like to say a little bit more to us about page

8: « Parmi les contribuables qui ne peuvent verser leurs impôts fonciers aux institutions scolaires de leur choix... » Could you tell us a little more about what you see and have experienced already in reference to that particular phrase?

Mme Soucie : Sûrement, les délégations qui vous viendront, par exemple, du nouveau Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton, section publique, section séparée, pourront vous exprimer plus clairement que moi des précisions à ce sujet. Ceci fait allusion aux difficultés historiques du soutien de deux systèmes publics, un qu'on appelait séparé et l'autre public en Ontario, et où bien sûr les contribuables catholiques ne pouvaient pas de façon évidente contribuer par la voie d'une corporation, n'avaient pas facilement accès au support du système séparé.

Alors, ce qu'on cite comme exemple ici, les actionnaires catholiques — Quand on a certaines corporations dont la proportion d'actionnaires catholiques ne peut être établie — Dans certains cas, ce n'est pas évident qu'on puisse identifier l'origine confessionnelle des actionnaires d'une corporation; dans ces cas-là, la difficulté est qu'ils ne peuvent pas nécessairement contribuer au support d'un système séparé, ce que certains actionnaires auraient voulu faire. L'autre difficulté nous apparaît être la situation des mariages mixtes, qui sont très nombreux évidemment dans la province. Pour toutes ces raisons, je pense qu'il faut trouver une façon de s'assurer que les taxes industrielles et commerciales ne passent pas à travers certains méandres administratifs historiques, connus de tous.

Mrs O'Neill : I wanted particularly to ask you that question, because I wanted to have in the record the difficulty with the mixed-marriage situation. If you have « d'autres exemples » beyond those two, I would be very happy. Maybe Madame Ladouceur has even more examples.

Mme Soucie : Sûrement, et M. Landry, je pense, pourrait aussi faire part de sa situation personnelle.

Mr Landry : In my case, that is the case. I am married to a Protestant person from up the valley. In order for my wife to vote for me as a school board trustee in the last elections, she had to sign this form renouncing her constitutional rights, which is ridiculous. That is why we are here today, to comment on this question of mixed marriages. It is a discrimination on her behalf and on behalf of both of us, if you understand that situation.

It is also very apparent that she cannot send her taxes where she wants to. Legally, she has to send her taxes to the public board. She has no choice in the matter. That is the discrimination that is pointed out in mixed marriages.

Mrs Ladouceur: I know one of our trustees at our board is a lawyer and his firm, because they are not all Catholic, had problems with respect to their taxes. There is a definite problem there. I think five out of six, or seven out of eight or something, were qualified to send their taxes to the separate system; because it was not the totality of them, then they could not do it, or if they could do it, it was involved. I am not sure, but I know it was a problem.

Mrs O'Neill: I think the new legislation will help.

Mrs Ladouceur: I know that what was announced seems to be going in that direction and that is why we are encouraged by that, but we hope it will follow through.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you.

Mme la Présidente : Le temps accordé à cette délégation est écoulé, mais il y a une autre question de M. R. F. Johnston.

M. R. F. Johnston : Vous avez déjà répondu à deux de mes questions, mais j'en ai deux autres.

Premièrement, pouvez-vous me décrire comment la gestion française est plus chère et pourquoi le système actuel n'accepte pas cette réalité ?

Mme Soucie : J'apprécie cette question, parce que ça touche une corde très sensible de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je référerai aussi les membres du comité à un document très intéressant, qui m'est parvenu seulement hier. C'est un rapport sur la mise au point de solutions pour la structure de l'éducation en français en Saskatchewan, « A Fransaskois component for the Saskatchewan school system ».

It is a report that was carried out by a group from Saskatchewan, but headed by Mr Gallant, former chairman of the National Capital Commission in Ottawa-Carleton.

What is evident in this report is that—

Il doit y avoir du rattrapage, parce que les écoles françaises ont été soutenues au détriment financier des ressources qui ont été dépensées dans ces écoles françaises. Depuis la reconnaissance des droits constitutionnels en cette matière, il y a un rattrapage à faire. Il est évident que l'enseignement en français coûte plus cher, parce qu'on traite d'une minorité, parfois plus difficile à atteindre.

Je pense tout simplement à des choses très pratiques, comme par exemple le transport. Quand on a, dans une région scolaire déterminée, un certain nombre d'élèves à recueillir sur un vaste territoire pour alimenter une école, ça coûte plus cher. Quand on a des livres à acheter à un prix beaucoup plus élevé parce que ce sont des livres qui ont une moins grande diffusion, parce qu'on manque de livres et qu'on doit en produire — ce sont là des raisons qui me viennent à l'esprit où ça coûte nécessairement plus cher.

Le rattrapage doit se faire aussi — le rattrapage par rapport à la plus grande participation des francophones au système séparé, comparativement au système public, mais même à l'intérieur du système public. Je n'ai qu'à vous rappeler l'histoire de l'école LeCaron à Penetanguishene, où le conseil scolaire public refusait l'accès à des ressources financières suffisantes pour permettre la construction d'une école secondaire française qui aurait offert des ressources équivalentes à celles offertes à la majorité dans l'école secondaire anglaise. Ceci se répète dans de nombreux cas dans toute la province.

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Je réfère aussi les membres du comité à un rapport interne préparé l'hiver dernier au sein du ministère de l'Éducation. Ayant siégé au Comité ministériel sur la gestion scolaire, qui était présidé par M. Charles Beer l'hiver dernier, nous avons su qu'à l'intérieur du ministère, on a fait une recherche sur les répercussions de l'équivalence français/anglais en Ontario. C'est un document que nous n'avons pas pu voir, que nous avons hâte de pouvoir lire et sur lequel nous avons hâte de pouvoir faire des commentaires. Mais il est certain que les membres de l'Assemblée législative devraient pouvoir avoir accès à ce document, qui doit contenir justement les prévisions budgétaires en vue d'une reconnaissance de l'équivalence des services éducatifs en français et en anglais.

M. R. F. Johnston : Le titre ?

Mme Soucie : Le titre, c'est L'Équivalence; maintenant, le ministère aura sûrement un titre plus élaboré, mais ça traite spécifiquement de l'équivalence et ça fait suite justement au jugement Sirois dans la cause Marchand.

M. R. F. Johnston : Peut-être pouvez-vous demander au ministère si nous pouvons—

Mme la Présidente : En français—

M. R. F. Johnston : Non, non, en anglais certainement. On ne veut pas avoir de confusion.

La deuxième question concerne le recensement actuel. Êtes-vous satisfaite du système

actuel; parce qu'une grande partie de votre mémoire est basée sur un bon système de recensement ?

Mme Soucie : Non, effectivement, il y a des problèmes majeurs. La difficulté principale étant que toute personne, francophone ou anglophone, ne s'étant pas identifiée, s'étant mal identifiée ou ayant mal répondu au questionnaire passait nécessairement du côté de la majorité. Cela, c'est la difficulté principale. La proposition qu'on avait faite au gouvernement, c'est que lors d'un premier recensement, tous les mal-inscrits devenaient des citoyens anglophones. On suggère qu'au prochain recensement, tous les mal-inscrits deviennent des citoyens francophones, juste pour équilibrer les choses. Ensuite, on pourra le faire avec plus de justice, si vous voulez.

Il s'agirait de faire certaines études. Par exemple, pour le recensement canadien, que fait-on avec les non-répondants ? Que fait-on avec les gens mal recensés ou qui ont mal répondu ? Notre suggestion est tout simplement de les exclure, au moins pour la détermination du nombre de conseillers scolaires. Mais il va falloir s'assurer qu'à un moment donné, ils soient bien inscrits pour la répartition de la taxe résidentielle. Donc, il faut améliorer le processus de recensement pour qu'il y ait justice de ce côté-là.

Je ne sais pas si M^{me} Ladouceur voudrait commenter ?

Mme Ladouceur : J'aimerais peut-être ajouter que quand on tient compte de la recommandation demandant que la taxe industrielle et commerciale soit répartie selon l'évaluation résidentielle et agricole — et si l'on ajoute le fait qu'actuellement, de la façon dont le recensement est fait, si les gens se sont mal identifiés, ils deviennent automatiquement anglophones et cela aggrave encore les choses, parce que les problèmes s'accumulent l'un par-dessus l'autre.

Alors, il y a un problème fondamental qui doit être réglé à ce niveau-là pour que toutes ces injustices soient éliminées. Si le recensement est bien fait, à ce moment-là, il n'y aura pas de difficultés à répartir selon le recensement.

M. R. F. Johnston : Cela est un des problèmes que j'ai avec le système, où notre financement de l'éducation se base sur la taxe résidentielle, surtout pour les groupes franco-phones de la province. C'est peut-être mieux d'avoir un certain pourcentage accepté après les négociations entre les communautés françaises et le gouvernement, et d'utiliser cette sorte de système et non pas un recensement — après tous

les problèmes que nous avons eus avec les recensements.

Mme Soucie : Pour nous, notre conclusion de cette expérience, c'est que le financement de base venant uniquement du recensement ne fait rien pour le rattrapage. Donc, à ce moment-là, c'est au niveau provincial —

Le jugement Sirois est très clair là-dessus : c'est le gouvernement provincial qui a la responsabilité de corriger les inégalités pour effectuer le rattrapage que doit faire le système scolaire chez les francophones en Ontario. Ce n'est pas aux citoyens d'une communauté spécifique seulement qu'incombe la correction qui doit être faite ; c'est vraiment le gouvernement provincial qui a cette responsabilité. Alors, je vous réfère encore au jugement Sirois dans la cause Marchand.

M. R. F. Johnston : Est-il possible aussi d'avoir une copie de ce document de la Saskatchewan ?

The Chairman : I am sorry.

Mr R. F. Johnston : Can the clerk try to get a copy of this document from Saskatchewan ?

The Chairman : The researcher has copied that down and will try to get that document for the committee. I am going to try one more time.

Merci à l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario de sa présentation aujourd'hui.

Notre prochaine délégation est l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. Bienvenue à notre comité.

I will repeat the instructions in English, just to make sure there is no misunderstanding, which is quite possible with the inadequate level of my French. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation and we hope that there will be some time left over at the end of your verbal presentation for questions from the committee members. Please begin whenever you are ready, and start by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

L'ASSOCIATION DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS FRANCO-ONTARIENS

M. R. Millaire : Merci beaucoup. Robert Millaire, président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, accompagné de Marc Cazabon, secrétaire-général adjoint de l'association.

Au nom de l'association, on aimerait vous remercier de nous avoir donné l'occasion de venir faire nos commentaires et nos recommandations sur le financement de l'éducation en Ontario.

Je vais lire certaines sections de notre rapport et commenter d'autres questions. Je vous tiendrai au courant d'où je suis situé au niveau du rapport.

A la page 3, une des grandes préoccupations est le partage de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle. Dans ses revendications antérieures, l'AEFO a toujours maintenu sa position à l'effet que toute réforme du régime de financement de l'éducation élémentaire et secondaire devrait assurer à tous les conseils scolaires un accès équitable aux ressources fiscales d'impôt foncier provenant de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle.

L'AEFO revendique depuis dix ans une réforme du régime de financement de l'éducation, qui assurerait une redistribution juste des revenus d'impôt foncier provenant de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle, de façon à permettre l'accès à une éducation de qualité à tous les élèves de la province.

L'initiative du gouvernement, annoncée en mai dernier, visant à partager au sein des conseils limitrophes ces revenus, représente un premier pas dans la bonne direction. Par contre, il y a des limitations. Le partage des revenus de l'impôt foncier, provenant de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle à l'intérieur des conseils limitrophes et des régions urbanisées, va produire l'effet que les conseils riches se partageront les richesses et les conseils moins riches se partageront très peu.

L'AEFO maintient qu'une véritable mise en commun doit équilibrer l'accès aux ressources parmi toutes les juridictions scolaires. Les régions non industrialisées consomment les biens des régions industrialisées et donc on devrait pouvoir partager les avantages de ces régions.

Une autre lacune de cette initiative est la mise en oeuvre graduelle sur une période de six ans. Nous croyons que cette période est trop longue et qu'on devrait accélérer la mise en oeuvre complète de la redistribution des ressources.

De même, la décision de partager l'accès aux ressources au prorata de l'évaluation résidentielle des conseils scolaires impliqués représente pour nous une autre faiblesse de cette initiative. L'AEFO maintient qu'un partage basé sur le nombre d'élèves relevant de la compétence de chaque conseil scolaire serait plus légitime que le partage proposé par le gouvernement. Les dépenses engagées par un conseil scolaire dépendent directement du nombre d'élèves à éduquer et des besoins particuliers de cette population étudiante. Les trois recommandations qui suivent pourraient corriger les faiblesses que nous voyons dans cette initiative.

A la page 5, au numéro 2. Faiblesses du régime actuel du financement de l'éducation : Depuis 1975, la baisse constante du pourcentage de participation financière du gouvernement s'est fait ressentir. Cette situation inquiète les conseillers et conseillères, ainsi que les administrateurs, les enseignantes et enseignants, et les contribuables qui croient que ceci menace la qualité de l'éducation en Ontario.

L'AEFO partage pleinement cette inquiétude. Toute réduction de l'engagement financier du gouvernement accroît le fardeau fiscal du niveau municipal. Le même problème se pose : les conseils riches pourront facilement survivre ; les conseils pauvres auront des pressions indues, et la qualité et la quantité des programmes des services éducatifs disponibles seront menacées.

A la recommandation 4 : Les dernières statistiques démontrent que le gouvernement finance présentement l'éducation à 47 pour cent. Nous croyons que ce niveau devrait passer à 60 pour cent des coûts appropriés.

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A la page 6. Plafonds des dépenses ordinaires : Le plafond des dépenses ordinaires reconnues est la base du financement de l'éducation. En somme, le plafond des dépenses ordinaires décrété annuellement par le gouvernement détermine le niveau d'équité en matière d'éducation.

L'AEFO maintient que lorsque le gouvernement établit les plafonds des dépenses ordinaires reconnues à un niveau irréaliste, l'équité visée par le régime de financement est en souffrance et l'égalité d'accès aux programmes et aux services éducatifs est menacée.

Pour être réalistes, les plafonds des dépenses ordinaires reconnues devraient s'établir à un niveau qui couvrirait les frais éducatifs impliqués d'au moins 80 pour cent des effectifs étudiants.

La recommandation 5 se rallie aux commentaires des pages 64 et 67 de la Commission Macdonald, qui recommande que le plafond des subventions par élève soit plus réaliste.

A la page 7, section c). Distinctions entre les paliers élémentaire et secondaire : annuellement, le ministère de l'Éducation établit deux plafonds de dépenses ordinaires reconnues ; l'un pour le palier élémentaire, l'autre pour le palier secondaire. Inévitablement, le plafond du palier secondaire est plus élevé.

L'AEFO est contre cette pratique. On considère qu'elle devrait être réévaluée et l'écart existant devrait être réduit entre l'élémentaire et le secondaire. Déjà le gouvernement reconnaît l'importance du financement à l'élémentaire et on donne déjà des subventions accrues pour la

première et la deuxième année. Il faut donc améliorer cette situation sans réduire le financement du secondaire. Cette pratique devrait être réévaluée à la lumière des récentes initiatives du gouvernement en matière d'éducation. Et je fais ici allusion à l'impact du parachèvement de l'éducation catholique.

Les recommandations 6 et 7 font allusion à cet accroissement nécessaire au niveau élémentaire et également à une façon de trouver un mécanisme pour étudier ce financement distinct, s'il est nécessaire ou non aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire. On fait déjà des études dans ce domaine et nous encourageons le gouvernement à les poursuivre.

À la page 8. Autres considérations de notre association : Le gouvernement a prévu des programmes de financement particuliers visant à assurer aux élèves l'accès à l'apprentissage de l'informatique. Sans limiter l'importance de l'informatique, l'AEFO croit que le gouvernement doit initier de nouveaux programmes visant à moderniser les ateliers de formation technologique et les laboratoires de sciences dans les écoles.

Prochaine considération, à la page 9. Entretien, réparation et construction d'établissements scolaires : Le gouvernement a limité, ces dernières années, le montant d'argent assigné à la réparation et à la construction des écoles. Les écoles construites entre 1960 et 1970 sont dans un état déplorable et ont besoin de travail. Les écoles de banlieue se sont vues ajouter des salles de classe portatives en grand nombre.

L'AEFO est heureuse d'apprendre qu'en mai dernier, le gouvernement avait l'intention de libérer certaines sommes pour répondre aux besoins des nouvelles écoles. Toutefois, l'AEFO maintient que le gouvernement doit accroître les sommes d'argent disponibles afin d'assurer la réparation et la modernisation des établissements scolaires.

La recommandation 10 a un objectif très spécifique : Nous espérons que le gouvernement pourrait éliminer d'ici trois ans l'utilisation des salles de classe portatives en Ontario.

L'éducation permanente et les programmes alternatifs d'éducation : S. B. Lawton, de l'Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, dans un rapport contracté par le ministère de l'Éducation, en est arrivé à la conclusion suivante : « An increase of the level of funds to continue education is necessary. » Dans le même rapport, il indiquait qu'il en coûte 18 pour cent de plus pour les cours d'éducation permanente en fran-

çais qu'il en coûte en anglais. Il faudrait donc tenir compte de cette différence de coûts.

À la page 10, dans la même veine, l'AEFO reconnaît le bien-fondé de la gamme de programmes alternatifs d'éducation visant à pallier aux problèmes des décrocheurs scolaires. Ces programmes nécessitent un financement adéquat, sans pour autant réduire les fonds nécessaires au programme régulier.

À la page 11, autres considérations : l'AEFO s'inquiète du fait que l'annonce des subventions générales d'éducation de 1989 intégrait au plafond des dépenses ordinaires les allocations jusqu'alors distinctes de l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté.

L'AEFO croit que ce financement devrait être distinct du plafond des dépenses ordinaires et ne devrait avoir aucune incidence sur les taxes scolaires locales. Avec l'intégration dans les classes régulières, le gouvernement devrait accroître ses allocations financières destinées à l'enfance en difficulté, de façon à assurer la disponibilité des services d'appui.

Le financement de ces programmes est la responsabilité exclusive du gouvernement et les recommandations 14, 15 et 16 parlent justement de cette responsabilité.

À la page 12, au numéro 4, un aspect très important pour notre association : le financement de l'éducation franco-ontarienne. Lors des consultations qui ont amené l'établissement d'un conseil scolaire de langue française dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton, le gouvernement indiquait qu'il allait instaurer les mécanismes de financement requis pour assurer à la population francophone un niveau de services et de programmes éducatifs comparable à celui qui serait disponible à la population anglophone de la région.

Le gouvernement s'engageait alors à fournir des subventions. Ces subventions de démarrage devraient assurer une transition ordonnée, sans réduction de services à la population francophone et sans accroissement de la responsabilité fiscale de la population anglophone. Au niveau du financement des services et des programmes éducatifs continus, le gouvernement indiquait que les ressources financières du conseil scolaire de langue française seraient suffisantes pour assurer le maintien d'un niveau de services et de programmes au moins comparable à celui accessible dans les conseils scolaires anglophones de la région.

À notre avis, le régime de financement prévu pour un conseil scolaire de langue française doit assurer que, pour un niveau de dépenses par

élève équivalent, le contribuable de langue française paie, sur une propriété de valeur égale, la même taxe scolaire que le contribuable d'un conseil scolaire anglophone. Il est indispensable que cette pratique de financement demeure, afin de faciliter la création d'autres conseils scolaires de langue française en province.

Les recommandations 17 et 18 parlent justement de cette subvention de démarrage des services comparables dans les conseils anglophones et demandent également de ne pas ajouter de fardeau fiscal supplémentaire chez les francophones en Ontario.

A la page 14. Etablissement des conseils scolaires de langue française : il va de soi que la priorité pour notre association, après la création des deux conseils scolaires de langue française, c'est-à-dire à Toronto et à Ottawa-Carleton, c'est d'avoir d'autres conseils de langue française dans les endroits où la population francophone le justifie.

Dans les milieux géographiques où la population francophone est moindre, nous recommandons la mise sur pied de conseils scolaires régionaux afin d'aider à la création d'un conseil francophone. La recommandation 19 est très spécifique : on demande au gouvernement qu'il établisse un échéancier très spécifique sur la création des ces futurs conseils.

La recommandation 20 parle de la restructuration des limites géographiques, afin de permettre l'établissement de conseils scolaires régionaux de langue française. La recommandation 21 parle d'établir immédiatement un comité consultatif afin d'assurer la mise en oeuvre de ces conseils.

A la page 15. Subventions pour l'enseignement en français : il y a des subventions très spécifiques requises pour les francophones. On devrait accroître le niveau des subventions, afin de permettre le développement du matériel d'apprentissage en langue française, la préparation de manuels scolaires et la réalisation de ressources pédagogiques et didactiques. Un montant additionnel devrait être alloué au Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques. Les domaines de perfectionnement professionnels et de ressources humaines devraient recevoir plus d'argent.

Dans trop de milieux, l'accès à des conseillers pédagogiques francophones est très limité. Également, face à la pénurie des enseignants en province, nous croyons que le gouvernement devrait allouer des sommes additionnelles aux facultés d'éducation et s'assurer que ces sommes vont directement à ces dernières afin de diminuer cette pénurie.

En conclusion, l'AEFO remercie le comité pour l'occasion qu'il lui a fournie de soumettre ses préoccupations en matière de financement de l'éducation. Notre association croit que le domaine du financement de l'éducation élémentaire et secondaire en Ontario nécessite une consultation soutenue de la part du gouvernement.

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La recommandation 24 demande que le gouvernement établisse un comité consultatif sur le financement de l'éducation, qui aurait la responsabilité continue d'aviser le Ministre en matière de financement de l'éducation. Vous retrouverez la liste complète des recommandations aux pages 18, 19 et 20. Merci beaucoup.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M. Millaire. Nous avons une question de la part de M. R. F. Johnston.

M. R. F. Johnston : C'est un bon mémoire. Il touche de nombreux sujets ; c'est donc difficile de décider par quelle question commencer. Il y a beaucoup de choses là-dedans que j'ai beaucoup aimées, l'assistance pour l'enfance en difficulté, entre autres ; mais pour moi, un des grands problèmes, c'est de savoir comment le gouvernement doit décider des plafonds des fonds pour les conseils scolaires. C'est maintenant une décision unilatérale de la part du gouvernement provincial. J'aimerais savoir si votre recommandation 24 suggère une façon de changer ce système, l'établissement d'un comité consultatif, pour avoir des plafonds réels et non fictifs, comme en ce moment. Pensez-vous que cette sorte de changement affectera la façon d'établir les plafonds ?

M. Millaire : En matière de financement, je dois vous référer à mon collègue, qui est beaucoup plus expert que moi.

M. Cazabon : Je pense qu'il est clair que la recommandation 24 aborde cette situation. Il existait en Ontario, il y a nombre d'années, un comité consultatif au ministère de l'Éducation, dont l'un des rôles était de faire des recommandations spécifiques concernant les domaines qui relèvent du financement de l'éducation, dont le plafond des dépenses ordinaires reconnues par la province. Il est évident que ça, c'est une façon d'influencer le calcul du plafond et d'essayer de l'établir à un niveau plus réaliste, compte tenu des dépenses effectuées par les conseils scolaires actuellement.

M. R. F. Johnston : Il y a autre chose, un problème qui peut se poser à l'avenir avec la recommandation 20. C'est l'idée d'avoir une

restructuration des régions géographiques pour les conseils scolaires francophones, votre idée d'avoir des régions qui correspondent aux régions des conseils scolaires ou des régions municipales. Il faut avoir les mêmes régions, et que les limites de ces régions soient identiques, « coterminous » comme on dit en anglais, pour calculer les taxes résidentielles. C'est très difficile si les régions sont différentes pour les catholiques, pour le système public et pour le système français. Comment avez-vous pensé obtenir une sorte de cohérence ?

M. Cazabon : Je pense qu'à ce niveau-là, l'établissement de la cohérence serait bien plus un problème du gouvernement. Il y a certainement des moyens d'établir des formules de péréquation qui permettraient l'établissement d'un niveau d'imposition. Ce que nous voulions régler, de prime abord, c'est l'urgence pour le gouvernement de considérer, pour les milieux où la population francophone est dispersée, le regroupement de ces effectifs dans des conseils scolaires régionaux. Je pense que le problème du financement peut se résoudre par les experts en la matière, par le calcul de formules de péréquation. Ce qui est important, c'est qu'on ne veut pas qu'on abandonne une partie de notre population franco-ontarienne qui, à cause des milieux géographiques et de sa disparité régionale, ne peut pas contrôler et gérer elle-même l'éducation de ses enfants.

M. R. F. Johnston : Finalement, j'ai une autre question à vous demander, que vous avez souvent abordée dans votre mémoire : cela concerne les résultats académiques des récentes épreuves internationales chez les jeunes Franco-Ontariens, spécialement les sciences et les mathématiques. A votre avis, quelle est la meilleure façon de changer ces résultats ? Avec des changements dans l'enseignement, de nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes ? Avec du matériel en français qui manque maintenant ? Quelle est la meilleure méthode à adopter pour changer cela ?

M. Millaire : Je crois que vous avez touché à un aspect très important : il y a très peu de matériel en français. Alors, c'est déjà un handicap pour commencer qui peut nuire à nos membres et à nos jeunes. Le fait que dans le passé, le financement a toujours été moindre pour les écoles françaises limite peut-être beaucoup aussi la possibilité de se procurer du matériel qui pourrait aider l'enseignant à faire son travail au niveau des sciences, au niveau des mathématiques.

Si on identifie des problèmes très particuliers, les endroits où il y a des lacunes — à mon avis, si on parle ici de formation au niveau des enseignants, le gouvernement devra s'assurer d'accorder des fonds pour libérer ces enseignants, pour essayer de faire le rattrapage requis — libérer des fonds pour du perfectionnement en cours d'emploi si c'est nécessaire. Alors, c'est peut-être une façon de contrecarrer les lacunes.

M. Furlong : Merci pour votre présentation. Je crois que beaucoup de recommandations que vous proposez vont coûter cher — où allons-nous trouver les sommes d'argent ? Je vais en mentionner seulement deux : la contribution de 60 pour cent de l'impôt foncier — je note que ce n'est pas 60 pour cent des coûts approuvés — et l'élimination des salles de classe portatives dans trois ans.

J'aimerais savoir si vous avez des idées sur la façon de trouver cet argent-là : va-t-il venir juste du gouvernement provincial ? Est-ce que ça va venir des citoyens, de l'impôt foncier ? J'aimerais le savoir, parce que je crois qu'il n'y aura jamais assez d'argent pour faire accepter toutes les recommandations que vous avez faites. J'aimerais avoir vos idées sur ça.

M. Millaire : Peut-être que je vais laisser à Marc l'aspect financier. Il y a un commentaire que j'aimerais faire : c'est qu'à mon avis, le gouvernement doit réévaluer ses priorités. On a diminué depuis plusieurs années le financement de l'éducation. Avec toutes nos recherches, on se rend compte qu'il y a des lacunes dans nos écoles en Ontario. J'ai l'impression que le gouvernement va être obligé de prendre le taureau par les cornes pour affecter les fonds là où on en a besoin.

On voit toutes sortes de rapports qui nous indiquent qu'il faut avoir du perfectionnement. Il faut que les jeunes s'améliorent dans telle ou telle situation, dans telle ou telle matière. Cela ne va pas de soi ; ça vient pas tout seul. Il faut que le gouvernement fasse des compromis. Cela nécessite des fonds et je crois sérieusement que le gouvernement va être obligé de réévaluer ses priorités et d'examiner par exemple les montants qui devraient être alloués à l'éducation.

M. Furlong : Je peux entrer dans un conseil pour dire que, surtout sur les affaires capitales — Dans les trois dernières années, le gouvernement a annoncé une augmentation de 300 000 millions de dollars. C'était sur trois années la première fois et puis là, c'est sur quatre années. Cela, c'est tellement plus que ce qu'il y avait avant. Le capital, on a pris des décisions et on a trouvé les fonds pour bâtir des écoles.

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Je ne crois pas qu'on est dans une situation, surtout dans les régions où la population arrive plus vite qu'on ne peut bâtir les écoles et les maisons – Je crois qu'ici à Ottawa, c'est la même chose. Moi, je viens de la région de Durham, près de Toronto. Je connais les salles de classe portatives et je crois qu'on a en plus que vous. Vous n'acceptez pas que la part du gouvernement devrait être de 60 pour cent des coûts approuvés ? Vous êtes certain que le montant devrait être de 60 pour cent de tous les coûts ?

M. Cazabon : Je pense que notre recommandation, dans le contexte où on la présentait, c'était 60 pour cent des coûts au niveau des dépenses ordinaires reconnues; alors, il ne faut pas la mettre hors contexte. Puis, je veux juste ajouter, pour reprendre un peu l'idée que le président Millaire donnait tantôt sur la question d'où l'argent va venir : c'est bien clair que pour nous, le financement de l'éducation, c'est une priorité et d'après nous, ça devrait être une priorité du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

En 1974-1975, l'Ontario a affecté, du total de ses dépenses, tout près de 16 pour cent à l'éducation. En 1987-1988, 10,6 pour cent des dépenses totales du gouvernement sont allouées à l'éducation.

Il est évident qu'il y a eu des changements de priorités ; il y a des réévaluations; mais d'après nous, il faudrait remettre la priorité sur l'éducation, parce que les coûts pour la province d'un échec en matière d'éducation sont bien plus grands que n'importe quel capital économique qu'on doit y investir aujourd'hui.

Mme la Présidente : Le temps est encore fini, mais un autre très petit commentaire de M. Villeneuve.

M. Villeneuve : Une toute petite question supplémentaire. Je vous remercie de votre présentation. Sur le point numéro 4, dont mon collègue parlait tout à l'heure, vous avez parlé de priorité et de 60 pour cent. Est-ce que le ministère de l'Éducation est réaliste quand il nous dit qu'actuellement, il finance 57 pour cent des coûts approuvés ? On sait que les dépenses sont beaucoup plus élevées que les coûts approuvés. Pouvez-vous nous expliquer ou nous donner un exemple, d'après vous, de ce qui n'est pas approuvé par le gouvernement, mais par contre de ce que vous voyez comme absolument essentiel au système ?

M. Cazabon : J'essaie d'analyser la portée de la question. Pour ce qui n'est pas approuvé – on parle des dépenses ordinaires – ce qui n'est pas

approuvé, c'est n'importe quoi qui n'est pas reflété dans le plafond. Il faut faire la distinction dans les conseils scolaires, et dans notre mémoire, je pense qu'on a essayé d'attirer votre attention sur la situation qui existe en Ontario. Il y a vraiment deux catégories de conseils scolaires : les conseils scolaires riches et les conseils scolaires pauvres.

Lorsque le gouvernement fixe son niveau de dépenses ordinaires reconnues à un niveau inférieur à ce qu'il devrait être, il élimine, pour ce que nous appelons les conseils scolaires pauvres, la possibilité de s'offrir une gamme de services et d'offrir à ses étudiants et à la population une gamme de services comparables à ce que peuvent s'offrir les riches.

On ne peut pas donner d'exemple spécifique, sinon en examinant les conseils scolaires qui ont des ressources financières limitées au niveau de l'impôt foncier, au niveau de l'évaluation résidentielle, même commerciale et industrielle.

On peut alors comparer les rapports élèves-maître, comparer les situations d'apprentissage dans ces conseils scolaires-là, comparer l'accès aux ressources en matériel d'appui, aux ressources humaines d'appui à l'enseignement. On s'aperçoit alors rapidement que c'est dans les conseils scolaires riches qu'on a des programmes avant-gardistes, qu'on a des programmes d'appui et de soutien très puissants ; tandis que dans les conseils scolaires pauvres – et là je parle des régions disons agricoles, des régions du Nord de l'Ontario, où les ressources sont plus limitées – ces programmes-là sont très limités, sinon presque pas disponibles.

On peut faire aussi la comparaison au niveau des francophones à l'intérieur d'une même limite géographique. Encore là, dans le secteur anglais, l'enseignement dispose de ressources, de conseillers pédagogiques ; on peut avoir dix ou douze de ces personnes qui offrent des services d'appui. Dans le secteur francophone, on en aura peut-être un. Alors si on veut des exemples concrets, je pense qu'il faut examiner les conseils scolaires pauvres et les comparer aux conseils scolaires riches.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M. Villeneuve ; merci, M. Millaire, et merci, M. Cazabon de votre présentation à notre comité aujourd'hui.

M. Millaire : Merci beaucoup.

Mme la Présidente : Notre prochaine délégation est le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton – section publique. Venez, s'il vous plaît.

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated 30 minutes for our presentation time. As you

will note, this does not always follow the letter of the law, but, as a courtesy to our presenters, we are trying to keep to that time limit. Begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and then begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

LE CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE LANGUE
FRANÇAISE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON –
SECTION PUBLIQUE

M. Racle : Gabriel Racle, président de la section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.

M. Collette : Norman Collette, directeur de l'éducation de la section publique du Conseil scolaire d'Ottawa-Carleton.

M. Jubainville : Raymond Jubainville, surintendant de la gestion de la section publique du Conseil scolaire d'Ottawa-Carleton.

M. Racle : M^{me} la Présidente, mesdames, messieurs, je tiens tout d'abord à souligner, en tant que président de la section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton et en son nom, que cette présentation est une première pour nous. En effet, c'est la première fois que notre section publique peut se faire entendre en tant qu'organisme légalement constitué et représentatif de l'éducation publique en langue française devant un comité de l'Assemblée législative. Et, bien entendu, c'est l'occasion pour nous de vous faire part de la façon dont nous percevons et nous vivons les problèmes du financement de l'éducation publique dans notre région, tout particulièrement en ce qui nous concerne.

Nous avons préparé un document qui vous a été remis et que vous aurez la possibilité d'étudier dans la suite des travaux de votre comité. Je voudrais tout simplement souligner en ce moment trois points qui, pour nous, nous semblent extrêmement importants. Le premier, c'est un principe de base en matière de financement ; le deuxième, ce sont quelques aperçus sur les modalités de financement de l'éducation en langue française ; et le troisième, c'est la section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton et son avenir.

Un principe de base en matière de financement : nous sommes très heureux que votre comité ait décidé de se pencher sur les questions du financement de l'éducation.

Le financement de l'éducation devrait être en effet la première priorité financière d'un gouvernement. Pourquoi ? Parce que l'éducation, c'est l'avenir d'un pays ; c'est l'avenir d'une province ; et pour que cet avenir soit prospère et

rentable, il faut inévitablement investir au départ, c'est-à-dire dans les écoles. Les secteurs commerciaux et industriels, et le monde des affaires savent fort bien qu'il faut consentir des investissements initiaux si l'on veut obtenir des bénéfices à la sortie. Il en va de même dans le domaine de l'éducation pour un gouvernement.

L'investissement dans l'éducation, c'est un investissement rentable. Le potentiel futur de la province dans les domaines de la création, du développement et de l'accroissement des revenus et des biens dans les secteurs commerciaux, industriels, culturels, artistiques et autres tient largement à la qualité de l'éducation offerte dans la province.

Je suis persuadé qu'il est de beaucoup préférable d'investir dans l'éducation que d'être obligé d'investir dans les établissements pénitentiaires, dans les centres de réhabilitation, dans les établissements psychiatriques ou hospitaliers, dans les programmes de lutte contre la drogue, l'alcoolisme, la délinquance, le chômage, que sais-je encore, pour remédier aux lacunes d'une éducation déficiente. Les investissements éducatifs sont des investissements productifs et rentables, à court et à long terme. Les autres, ceux dont je viens de parler, sont pour une large part des investissements de récupération, des palliatifs.

Il est donc tout à fait regrettable de constater que les fonds affectés par le gouvernement au secteur de l'éducation sont passés de 61,3 pour cent du budget en 1975 à seulement 46,2 pour cent en 1986. Cette tendance est non seulement dangereuse pour l'éducation ; elle l'est aussi pour l'avenir de la province elle-même.

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Quelques aperçus sur les modalités de financement de l'éducation, particulièrement en langue française.

Nous sommes d'accord avec le principe d'une responsabilité partagée entre la province et les conseils scolaires. La province détermine les orientations fondamentales et assure le financement de base. Les conseils répondent aux besoins plus spécifiques et plus immédiats des communautés qui participent au financement local.

Mais nous assistons avec inquiétude à l'apparition d'une tendance administrative qui ne respecte plus l'autonomie locale par l'utilisation de stratégies de centralisation ou de modalités d'attribution des subventions qui équivalent à un véritable contrôle limitatif des activités des conseils.

Le respect des responsabilités des conseils devrait être un principe de base en matière de

financement. Et ce principe devrait s'accompagner d'un autre principe tout aussi essentiel : celui de l'équité. Équité ne veut pas dire uniformité, et je m'explique.

Tous les étudiants en Ontario ont droit à une éducation de qualité, au secondaire comme à l'élémentaire ; mais précisément pour assurer cette qualité, il faut tenir compte des situations particulières, des disparités géographiques, sociales ou culturelles. Les groupes minoritaires notamment, dont nous faisons partie en tant que francophones, doivent pouvoir se mettre à jour.

Les francophones ont des retards à combler, des retards constatés par des études, comme par exemple celle de Stacy Churchill, Normand Frenette et Saeed Quazi, pour n'en mentionner qu'une seule. Il ne s'agit pas d'une infériorité intellectuelle, mais d'un manque de ressources adéquates pour répondre à des besoins. Et ces manques tiennent au système de taxation, par exemple, ou à l'utilisation de critères administratifs appliqués uniformément ; et l'on voit de suite le cercle vicieux.

Je ne donnerai qu'un exemple, mais un exemple très concret. Notre section publique a une assiette fiscale insuffisante, puisque nous ne disposons pas de revenus provenant d'entreprises industrielles ou commerciales. Mais nous devons financer nous-mêmes à partir de ces maigres revenus l'achat de salles de classe portatives pour offrir un service éducatif à nos élèves.

Pourquoi devons-nous le faire ? Parce que l'évaluation de la capacité des écoles faite par le ministère de l'Éducation, évaluation qui détermine les subventions, est absolument inapplicable, car elle nous amènerait à entasser nos élèves.

Donc, si nous n'achetons pas ces salles de classe portatives, nous ne pouvons pas offrir de services éducatifs. Nous avons donc moins d'élèves, et moins de revenus, et nous ne pouvons pas alors justifier l'ouverture de nouveaux modules scolaires, et nous avons alors moins d'assistance financière du gouvernement. On voit où va ce cercle, qui est tout à fait vicieux. L'uniformité est un autre point de vue contraire à l'équité, puisque finalement elle est injuste.

Et puisque je parle de notre section publique, j'en viendrai à mon troisième point : l'avenir de notre section.

A notre avis, le statut de notre section devrait être révisé, car nous sommes, nous du secteur public, doublement minoritaires : nous sommes minoritaires en temps que francophones et nous sommes minoritaires en tant que section publique.

Notre conception de l'éducation accentue l'ouverture sur l'autre. Elle met l'accent sur les valeurs humaines, sur les richesses d'une perspective humaniste. Elle respecte toutes les croyances ; elle intègre le multiculturalisme, la richesse des personnes, la diversité.

De ce fait, nous avons beaucoup d'affinités avec les conseils publics de la région et de la province. Nous pensons donc qu'il faut aller beaucoup plus loin que ce que propose le rapport de la Commission Macdonald, à savoir la formation d'unités coopératives et l'achat de services éducatifs.

Nous demandons donc avec instance que les mécanismes de financement nous accordent la possibilité de nous associer aux conseils publics de langue anglaise par la mise sur pied d'un système semblable à celui de la Communauté urbaine de Toronto.

Notre section publique pourrait ainsi devenir un conseil public de langue française, comme celui de Toronto, associé aux autres conseils publics de la région. Et nous souhaitons que cette question, vitale pour notre avenir, soit étudiée très rapidement, ce qui peut se faire d'autant plus facilement qu'un modèle existe déjà.

Voilà, M^{me} la Présidente, mesdames, messieurs, quelques points que je voulais souligner au cours de cette présentation. Nous sommes maintenant à votre disposition pour les questions que vous voudriez bien nous poser. Je vous remercie de nous avoir écoutés.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M. Racle. Des questions des députés ? M. Furlong.

M. Furlong : Je voudrais poser une question sur l'égalité entre les systèmes d'éducation. C'est une question qui a été posée, je pense, par M. Johnston plusieurs fois depuis qu'on a commencé. Les écoles publiques n'ont pas le choix des élèves qu'elles acceptent dans leurs salles de classe.

Dans les écoles francophones ou les écoles séparées, il y a un choix. Vous n'êtes pas obligé d'accepter les étudiants. Est-ce que vous pourriez nous donner une idée de ce qu'on peut faire pour assurer l'égalité ? Quand on va faire des recommandations, on parle d'égalité. Je crois que c'est la raison pour laquelle les subventions ne sont pas pareilles.

M. Collette : Dans la situation dans laquelle nous nous trouvons, et pour répondre à M. Furlong, le but des demandes que nous faisons, à la section publique, c'est de répondre aux besoins de tous les intervenants, de tous les gens que nous devons accepter. Si nous acceptons tout le monde, nous nous plaçons essentiellement sur

un pied d'égalité, si vous voulez, avec les conseils publics anglophones. Et à ce moment-là, c'est dans ce sens-là que nous dirigeons peut-être nos efforts pour être capables de répondre à ces besoins-là.

Dans certains cas, on s'aperçoit que nous recevons des élèves qui exigent parfois des ressources humaines et financières plus élevées que la normale. C'est donc dire qu'au lieu d'une situation où le financement que nous recevons est adéquat, nous avons cette dimension additionnelle. Notre vision, je crois, c'est essentiellement de répondre à tous les besoins de tous les jeunes qui nous viennent, comme vous l'avez indiqué, et c'est pour cette raison qu'il faut avoir un financement qui soit l'équivalent de ce que nous recevions si nous étions dans une situation telle que les anglophones le sont présentement dans les sections publiques.

M. Furlong : Pourrais-je poser une autre question ? Pour ce qui est de la contribution du gouvernement, vous avez mentionné qu'elle était passée de 60 pour cent à 42 ou 43 pour cent. Vous avez entendu les questions précédentes. Est-ce que vous pensez que 60 pour cent constitue un montant adéquat pour les services — je parle généralement dans la province. De plus, en ce qui concerne ces 60 pour cent, est-ce qu'on parle du montant des coûts approuvés ou seulement des coûts de toutes les dépenses ?

M. Jubainville : Nous parlons évidemment de 60 pour cent de tous les coûts et non pas seulement des coûts approuvés. C'est le débat que nous avons depuis plusieurs années avec le gouvernement, qui nous dit que les 60 pour cent, c'est sur les coûts approuvés. Le problème, c'est que les coûts approuvés sont déterminés par des plafonds et ces plafonds étant maintenus très bas comparativement aux augmentations des coûts, les 60 pour cent deviennent un non-sens et nous les gardons à l'intérieur des coûts approuvés.

Comme dans la réponse qui vous a été donnée par le groupe précédent, nous étudions l'ensemble des coûts de l'éducation. Présentement, un taux de 60 pour cent représenterait une amélioration et correspondrait à la promesse faite et à l'engagement pris pour le Canada par les conseils des ministres, si je me souviens bien, en 1975 ou 1976.

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M. Furlong : C'est seulement mon idée, et je ne parle pas pour le comité ou pour le gouvernement : seulement, je peux dire que même si on monte ça à 60 pour cent, si la Commission faisait ça l'année prochaine, et si le comité passait dans la province, il y aurait des discussions à l'effet

que 60 pour cent, ce n'est pas assez. Je pense qu'il n'y en a jamais assez.

Mme la Présidente : C'est vrai. M. Villeneuve, puis M. Johnston.

M. Villeneuve : On vous remercie de votre présentation du côté du secteur public.

Au niveau séparé francophone, nous avons certains critères assez sévères à respecter pour que les étudiants soient acceptés si leurs parents ne sont pas des contribuables, par exemple, qu'il y ait de la francophonie dans la maison avant l'inscription. Quels sont vos critères pour devenir étudiant au sein de la section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton ?

M. Colette : Effectivement, disons qu'on est très fier, à la section publique, d'avoir une grande souplesse dans ce sens-là. Ce que nous demandons, c'est évidemment que les personnes soient des contribuables à la section publique, puisque c'est évidemment là où on en a besoin pour fonctionner.

Il faut remarquer également que nous avons, à l'élémentaire et au secondaire, une situation différente ; c'est-à-dire que les élèves du secondaire ont libre accès aux écoles de leur choix. Disons, dans ce sens, que s'ils veulent aller à l'école du coin, qui est une école de la section catholique, ils peuvent y aller; et la même chose pour une école publique.

Alors, c'est tout de même une situation assez différente au secondaire. A l'élémentaire, disons que nous insistons sur cette dimension-là, mais je peux vous dire que nous avons voulu assurer l'éducation des jeunes et que nous les accueillons dans la mesure du possible dans notre système.

M. Villeneuve : Deuxièmement, le mandat du comité, une façon différente d'obtenir les fonds nécessaires pour le financement de l'éducation — Vous avez mentionné que le taux de 60 pour cent du coût total devrait être assumé par la province, mais vous n'avez pas parlé de la façon d'aller chercher les montants assez astronomiques qui sont nécessaires pour le financement global, du côté évaluation, du côté impôt.

Je ne sais pas, je n'ai pas eu l'occasion de lire complètement vos recommandations; mais de quel côté êtes-vous orienté, sur l'impôt foncier ou est-ce que vous aimeriez voir une combinaison de l'impôt foncier et de l'impôt sur le revenu ? Pourriez-vous nous faire part de vos pensées sur ce point ?

M. Jubainville : La section n'a pas pris de position ferme. Notre tendance actuelle est de maintenir l'ensemble du système de revenu en

vigueur, c'est-à-dire que l'ensemble devrait venir des revenus généraux de la province.

La Commission Macdonald proposait différentes façons — une taxe éducationnelle ; ça ne semble pas être une approche que nous considérons valable présentement. Le système d'impôt foncier nous semble valable, mais il est actuellement surchargé et cela risque d'affecter la capacité des contribuables locaux d'absorber d'autres augmentations à tous les niveaux, tant au niveau des conseils scolaires qu'au niveau des municipalités. Je pense que nous arrivons au maximum de ce qu'ils peuvent prendre présentement. Nous ne proposons pas dans le mémoire de changements radicaux au niveau des méthodes pour obtenir les revenus.

M. Racle : Si je peux ajouter un élément d'information. C'est justement ce qui d'ailleurs nous pose un problème à nous, à la section publique : nous ne pouvons pas taxer nos contribuables à un taux plus élevé que celui que nous avons, parce que ça deviendrait un fardeau tout à fait insupportable et que ça nous placerait dans une situation difficile par rapport aux conseils environnants.

Et de ce point de vue-là, nous nous trouvons dans une position extrêmement difficile et délicate sur le plan financier, parce que nous n'avons pas une assiette fiscale suffisante, étant donné que pour le moment, tous les revenus commerciaux ou industriels et autres ne nous sont pas accessibles.

M. Villeneuve : Nous avons un dilemme aussi sur la façon dont le recensement a été fait en 1986 ; maintenant, il y a eu des erreurs, inévitablement. Mais par contre, il semblerait y avoir une certaine appréhension, pour une raison ou pour une autre, et puis j'aimerais que vous nous donniez vos commentaires — une certaine appréhension chez ceux qui auraient peut-être pu se qualifier comme contribuables à la section française publique d'Ottawa-Carleton, mais qui, pour une raison ou pour une autre, ont choisi de faire autrement. Pourriez-vous faire des commentaires là-dessus ?

M. Jubainville : Il est possible qu'il y ait des raisons historiques pour lesquelles les gens font le choix qu'il font. Je pense que la campagne, au niveau du recensement — La loi a été passée environ, je pense, deux semaines avant le début du recensement. Je pense que la majorité de la population en Ontario avait peu d'idées vraiment sur le choix qu'elle faisait. Je pense que ça demanderait une campagne assez élaborée. Je pense que nous avons obtenu des résultats plus

élevés que ceux que nous avons même prévus, étant donné les circonstances.

Alors, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait nécessairement d'hésitation. Notre préoccupation évidemment comme section publique, puisque nous sommes assez nouveaux en Ontario, c'est davantage de pouvoir offrir les services partout à l'intérieur de notre territoire. Présentement, nos écoles sont concentrées dans une région restreinte.

Evidemment, pour aller chercher les contribuables, il faut offrir les services. Nous sommes dans le dilemme, tel que mentionné par le président, que sans le financement, nous ne pouvons offrir les services ; sans les services, nous n'avons pas le financement. C'est un genre de cercle vicieux. C'est le même problème pour aller chercher les contribuables.

Un autre aspect, au niveau du recensement, c'est que dans le projet de loi 109 sur le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton, nous avons libre accès au niveau élémentaire dans les écoles anglophones ou francophones. Ce qui arrive, c'est que les parents peuvent payer leurs taxes au conseil anglophone, au conseil scolaire d'Ottawa ou au conseil d'éducation de Carleton, et quand même inscrire leurs enfants dans nos écoles ; ce qui fait que nous avons très peu de contrôle.

Au niveau secondaire, c'est libre entre le public et le séparé, ce qui veut dire que nous avons très peu de contrôle sur nos contribuables et notre clientèle ; ça peut être deux groupes tout à fait distincts. Nous pouvons avoir 15 000 étudiants et puis très peu de contribuables éventuellement. Alors, le dilemme est assez particulier ; c'est assez unique, je crois, en Ontario.

M. Villeneuve : Je vous remercie. Ce n'est pas une question à laquelle il était facile de répondre, mais je suis content que vous ayez pu faire savoir ce que vous pensiez là-dessus.

M. R. F. Johnston : Votre dernière réponse portait sur un problème que j'ai actuellement : je ne sais pas comment on peut garder notre système de financement actuel et avoir une comptabilité simple et claire pour les électeurs.

Vous avez donné une autre raison pour cette sorte de problème. Nous avons des régions riches, où presque tous les frais sont assumés par les conseils scolaires ; nous avons des régions pauvres, où la province paie presque le total des frais. Mais nous avons un contrôle des programmes scolaires par la province et peu de programmes qui sont donnés par une région — C'est très difficile pour un électeur de savoir où

mettre de la pression pour avoir des changements.

C'est une des raisons pour lesquelles j'aime l'idée de M. Macdonald, qui est d'adopter un système avec plus de comptabilité. Mais j'aimerais avoir votre solution à ce problème, parce que nous avons parlé d'un besoin de simplicité. Avec les problèmes que nous avons, spécialement ici à Ottawa, je ne sais pas comment on peut avoir un système simple maintenant.

M. Jubainville : Il est très difficile d'entrer dans les détails sur la façon de simplifier à ce niveau-là, au niveau actuel de la discussion. Je pense qu'il faudra revoir l'ensemble. Nous insistons sur la simplicité dans le document, justement pour que le contribuable sache clairement qui a pris la décision.

Présentement, le gouvernement annonce de nouvelles initiatives ; il annonce des subventions pour ces initiatives-là, mais les conseils sont responsables de la mise en oeuvre. Souvent, les conseils ont une partie des subventions, ou peut-être 20 000 \$ pour un programme qui va en coûter 60 000 \$, ou 100 000 \$ pour un programme qui va en coûter 300 000 \$. Le conseil ne peut pas toujours absorber la différence.

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Le contribuable se pose la question : « Qui a pris la décision d'avoir ou de ne pas avoir ce programme ? » La décision est habituellement prise ou pas prise à deux niveaux. Il est essentiel, à mon avis, de simplifier pour que le contribuable sache exactement où a été prise la décision. C'est dans ce sens-là qu'on regarde la simplicité.

L'autre aspect, qui est contenu dans le mémoire, est le concept des subventions globales initiales de façon à ce que les contribuables sachent, à ce moment-là, que la décision a été prise par le conseil scolaire. La tendance actuelle, qui est d'avoir beaucoup de nouvelles initiatives et une série de programmes subventionnés partiellement plutôt que globalement, fait que la prise de décision est diluée entre le provincial et le local, ce qui fait que le contribuable ne peut pas identifier la cause ou le groupe décisionnel précis.

M. R. F. Johnston : J'ai une autre question difficile. Ici, on se concentre seulement sur les contribuables et non pas sur les responsabilités de tous les citoyens face à l'éducation ou sur les résultats de l'éducation pour notre société. On a un problème, parce qu'on peut dire que l'éducation des francophones, c'est l'affaire des francophones. Cela n'enlève rien à notre société en général. J'aimerais savoir comment on peut créer une sorte de lien entre les citoyens qui n'ont pas

d'enfants dans votre système, mais qui paient maintenant pour le système public ; dans un sens global, pas seulement dans votre région, mais partout dans la province.

M. Racle : C'est une question à laquelle il est difficile de répondre, effectivement, parce que ça suppose une réorganisation complète du système de financement. Là, il y a d'ailleurs diverses possibilités. On pourrait concevoir que ce soit pour l'ensemble de la province, avec une répartition qui serait faite au niveau provincial. Mais ça risque d'avoir des conséquences extrêmement fâcheuses sur l'autonomie régionale, l'autonomie des conseils, et sur la possibilité pour chaque conseil de répondre à des besoins spécifiques. C'est un point que nous avons d'ailleurs souligné dans notre mémoire.

Il y a peut-être une autre possibilité qui, dans un premier temps, nous semble plus intéressante. C'est celle que j'ai mentionnée en terminant, à savoir le regroupement régional des conseils en fonction de leur concept de l'éducation. Donc, ce que je mentionnais tout à l'heure : une association de la section publique, qui peut être considérée comme un conseil scolaire public de langue française, avec des conseils publics anglophones où, à ce moment-là, on peut avoir une répartition pour l'ensemble d'une région à partir de participants qui partagent les mêmes vues en éducation.

Je crois que c'est une approche qui, dans un premier temps, peut être plus intéressante et moins complexe que de vouloir gérer tout un système, qui peut avoir quand même des inconvénients sur le plan local.

M. R. F. Johnston : Cette question est mal posée ; mais je pense que la situation à Ottawa est différente de ce qu'elle serait à Timmins si on avait un conseil scolaire francophone public, par exemple. Il n'y aurait pas assez de ressources locales pour avoir cette sorte de responsabilité directe pour les programmes élaborés par le conseil. Les autres conseils scolaires francophones de Toronto ont la responsabilité constitutionnelle de donner un niveau d'éducation. Un des problèmes tangibles, c'est de savoir quelle est ma responsabilité comme citoyen à Toronto pour cette sorte de division éducative à Timmins ou ailleurs dans la province.

M. Racle : Je pense que d'abord, ça suppose une analyse régionale des différences en vue de ce que nous mentionnions tout à l'heure, à savoir qu'il est important que soit assurée l'équité, qui évidemment n'est pas l'uniformité. Donc, ça peut vouloir dire qu'il faut davantage de subventions dans une région plutôt que dans une autre,

pour que l'éducation puisse avoir la même qualité dans toute la province. Mais je crois que ça suppose une étude assez poussée soit des particularités régionales, soit des ressources locales, qui peuvent être mises à contribution de manière à s'en tenir à ce grand principe d'équité.

M. Jubainville : Il y a aussi en fait l'aspect politique, qui est de vendre la décision d'offrir les programmes à tous les niveaux et de répondre à ses obligations constitutionnelles. Je pense que l'on peut se poser la question. Parfois, comme vous le mentionnez, les gens de Toronto peuvent se demander pourquoi ils doivent appuyer la mise sur pied de certains programmes à Timmins, mais je peux vous assurer que les gens de Timmins se posent souvent la question : pourquoi doivent-ils payer pour une série de programmes qui se passent à Toronto ?

Il y a plein de services qui existent à Toronto qu'on ne retrouve pas à Timmins, que ce soit en éducation ou dans tout autre domaine. Je n'entrerai pas dans les détails ; je pense qu'on les connaît ; c'est une question de vente, que ce soit en éducation ou dans tout autre domaine. Si on parle d'équité, on a une obligation, je pense, face à la constitution et des obligations comme société pour tout l'Ontario. On doit s'assurer que la population comprend, favorise et approuve maintenant les programmes qui sont mis sur pied. C'est une question, à mon avis, d'avantage politique, une fois qu'une décision a été prise.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M. Johnston, et merci aussi de votre présentation à notre comité aujourd'hui.

M. Racle: Merci.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by Irma Cohen. Please be seated. We have allocated 15 minutes for your presentation time and we hope there will be at least a couple of minutes out of that for questions from the members. Begin whenever you are ready. After about 10 minutes I will let you know what the time is, so then you can decide how to allocate the rest of it. Begin whenever you are ready.

IRMA COHEN

Mrs Cohen: Thank you very much for inviting me. You can relax; I am not asking for money. My topic is how much mathematics do all math teachers know, subtitled *Let's Stop Wasting Money on Math Ignoramuses*.

A physical education teacher teaching calculus; a guidance counsellor teaching mathematics for a decade; a math-12A teacher who never had a university math course; grade 13 math teachers who cannot do many of the problems on the final

exams that are handed to them; grade 13 teachers with only one or two university math courses; the list can go on and on.

I am not describing the staff of some small northern school which has difficulty getting teachers. I am talking about the Ottawa area, which has had an oversupply of anglophone math teachers for many years and still does, in spite of all the talk of a teacher shortage.

How many university math courses does a high school math teacher need? How could these things happen? Are they legal? Who is responsible? What can be done to improve the quality of teacher math training? How can a parent tell if his child has a dunce's cap math teacher; that is, one without a university math major or strong minor or without record card qualifications in intermediate/senior math? I will answer these questions.

A high school math teacher has three documents; the first two are from the ministry: (1) A teacher certificate, showing he has completed a year of teacher training; (2) an Ontario qualifications record card, showing which subjects and levels, intermediate or senior, he is trained to teach as a major or minor subject; (3) a group-rating statement from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, showing the extent of his training.

The weak Education Act, regulation 262, section 20 on the qualifications of teachers—that is page 6 in this handout—allows anyone with a certificate to teach any general studies subject, including math, even if he or she never had a university course in the subject. That is right: Get yourself a teacher's certificate and you may teach calculus, even if you never had grade 12 math, let alone university math.

Moreover, getting Ontario teacher's qualifications record card qualifications in senior math requires only two or three university math courses; hardly a sign of great interest in mathematics. Even those two or three courses do not have to be designed for math, science or engineering students. They can be easy, soft courses, designed for social science students.

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The Ottawa Board of Education newspaper ads for high school teachers, and there is a sample here on page 8, specify that they want applicants to have record card qualifications appropriate for the job subject and level. But even when there were several such applicants, they have repeatedly hired those without them, sometimes without even advertising. Vice-principals, principals, superintendents and direc-

tors of education are all responsible for these hirings.

Why would they hire obvious incompetents for senior math courses when there are well-qualified candidates? Teachers who can barely keep one page ahead of the students give easy courses so few students drop out, which makes the administrators look better. A lower dropout rate means more provincial funds. What has happened to these unscrupulous administrators, who put their own advancement ahead of the education of the students? They got better jobs. Because many of these officials are still in high positions, we need an independent investigation, going back some 20 years, to see who was responsible for these dastardly deeds, or else they will continue these unsound hiring practices to boost enrolments.

What has the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation done about this educationally unsound situation? It has repeatedly crushed teachers' complaints about it, even though having a math ignoramus on staff means more work for math-qualified teachers: making up and checking final exams, examining textbooks and of course undoing the damage done by those ignoramuses in previous courses.

Why have boards of trustees allowed this? Most trustees know little or nothing about teacher qualifications. The administration keeps them in the dark and, sad to say, many do not care. They just want to get re-elected without letting the public see all the dirt accumulated under the carpet for 20 years.

How can you know if your child's teacher has record card qualifications in math? You cannot. For a top salary of over \$54,000 a year, we should expect a teacher to have an interest in math, to have cultivated that interest by enhancing his knowledge with a university major or at least a strong minor in mathematics, preferably with an honours degree.

Physicians post their certificates to show you whether they are general practitioners or specialists in some field. You would not want an obstetrician performing eye surgery on you and then, to add insult to injury, to get the same fee as a qualified eye surgeon, but that sort of thing is precisely what often happens in high schools.

Teachers teach subjects, sometimes on the grade 12 and grade 13 OAC levels, for which they have little or no university training, no record card qualifications. Schools permit high school teachers to retain full-time employment by teaching mathematics when there are not enough classes in their own fields. Boards often

do not even advertise for part-time math-qualified teachers in such cases.

Who goes in to observe teachers? Principals, who usually have no knowledge of mathematics. The teacher could be spouting nonsense, and probably is, but the principal would not recognize this obvious sign of incompetency. Math heads should observe math teachers.

How can we improve the teaching in our schools? How can we raise standards so students do not get cheated by unscrupulous administrators? All teachers should be required to post their record card and group rating cards. We need provincial legislation raising the subject requirements for high school teachers and forbidding, except in emergencies, with ministerial permit, teaching by those without the appropriate subject and level record card qualifications. Teachers should be required to upgrade their knowledge of their subject with university courses to meet the new higher requirements; that is, no grandfather clause.

Board-wide or province-wide exams in grade 12 and OAC courses will not improve the quality of teaching. Incompetent teachers and weak schools can circumvent the intent of those exams by marking them easy or teaching to the exam. If the teacher cannot do many problems, what kind of course can he or she teach? What can the students learn? With the present emphasis on decreasing the dropout rate, we must not allow unscrupulous administrators to continue to hire dunces.

Within the next five years, many high school teachers will be replaced because of retirement. Let's not condemn the next generation to 30 years of well-paid math ignoramuses. That is no way to prepare students for a high-technology society. Let's strengthen our education system at no extra cost.

In summary, we need the following provincial legislation:

1. Raise the subject requirement for the Ontario teacher's qualifications record card. The present requirement of two or three university courses to teach senior math is absurdly low. It should be at least six university courses, even for intermediate math qualifications; six university courses means two courses a year for a three-year degree, and I do not think that is excessive.

2. Forbid teachers to teach high school subjects for which they have no record card qualifications. This will deter, first, the hiring of incompetents and, second, teachers filling in their timetables with courses they are not qualified to teach.

3. Require all teachers to post in their classrooms their record card and group rating statements.

Students and parents have a right to know what they are paying for and who is teaching their children.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I remember being an impossible task for any math teacher myself during the high school period. I had two teachers who had their master's degree in math and a high school principal who was a math graduate himself, and they could not get anywhere with me at all, but I also think they were lousy teachers, frankly.

One of the things you do not touch here at all is the notion that somehow credits and qualifications, sometimes picked up from summer courses, sometimes otherwise, necessarily make somebody a better teacher than somebody who does not have them. I find that a little bit black and white there.

Mrs Cohen: I have talked with people teaching calculus who have had only one or two university math courses; they could not answer a math question if they wanted to.

You are assuming that because someone has had a good background in mathematics, he cannot teach math. The question is, can someone with one or two math courses teach math? The answer is no. He or she could not answer a question and would not understand the implications of a question if he or she tried. Our system is full of people who have had one or two math courses at university and who cannot do anything except what is in the textbook, if they can do that much.

By the way, I have taught with almost all the people listed here and you do not want to teach with some people. I have taken over classes from a physical education teacher who did not know what he was doing and I had to undo the damage he did.

Yes, you can have people with master's degrees who cannot teach, but the person who does not have a math background cannot even get to first base. He does not know what he is doing. It is just plain talk.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you happen to know offhand whether the demands for a background in math are different in Quebec or in British Columbia, for example, than they are in Ontario?

Mrs Cohen: I do not know. I am originally from the United States, as you can hear by my accent, and in New York City, at least years ago, you needed about 36 credits, which would be at least six full courses, I believe. You needed

much more in the United States than in Ontario, at least in New York.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested to see if we could find out what the different requirements are in other provinces, because on recent international tests, British Columbia did exceptionally well against Korea, the highest. In fact, they came ahead of Korea in one of the results on math, and Quebec came second or third as well. Ontario ranked somewhere in the middle range for anglophones and much lower for francophones. It would be interesting to see if there is any correlation, in terms of those kinds of international tests and the kinds of qualifications that are there.

1200

Mrs Cohen: Do I have another minute? I would just like to say, in the case of francophone teachers, at least in the Ottawa area, there is a severe shortage of francophone teachers in all fields, so the chances of getting a francophone who does not know much math teaching math, unfortunately, are much greater. In elementary schools, again, there is a shortage of francophone teachers, because of the popularity of French immersion. The chances of getting someone who really does not know very much math, who did poorly at university, who hated math, are unfortunately much greater. I am sure that has something to do with the fact that francophones are doing worse on these tests.

Also, in a small school you are going to have more chance of people teaching who have no record card qualifications. I am sure that has some effect. It has obviously had an effect on the qualifications of francophones, and I would not be surprised if the separate schools were doing worse than the public schools for the same reasons: smaller schools. You have more instances of teachers teaching courses for which they have no qualifications. In other words, they are not interested in the subject, they never studied it and they really do not care.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Would it be possible for somebody to get that kind of breakdown? The recent provincial study that was done on this did not break it down between sizes of jurisdictions or sizes of schools or between Catholic and Protestant, but it did between French and English, where in fact you are right. The findings were that many people who were teaching in the French system, for all the reasons you indicated, did not have the specific appropriate background for the courses they were teaching. It would be interesting to see if there is that kind of

information available within the bureaucracy, with all the things they produce.

Mrs Cohen: My experience teaching makeup courses in the summer with separate school students is that they usually did worse, and the parents often called me—they were the only parents who ever called me—saying I was covering topics that had never been covered. I am wondering whether it is because of these small schools and teachers who did not have the appropriate qualifications.

Mr R. F. Johnston: General academic qualifications in the past, because there was primarily just an academic stream in the Catholic system, were often higher than the public school system, on average. So I do not know.

The Chairman: Dr Gardner is going to endeavour to get that information for you, Mr Johnston, and see if there is that breakdown. Thank you very much, Mrs Cohen, for your presentation today.

Notre prochaine présentation est aussi en français. M. Gilles Marleau.

M. Marleau, bienvenue à notre comité.

Perhaps I should say the next part in English, since I am not sure that my French translation is up to it. I understand that you do have a Charter of Rights case before the courts right now on the issue of the financing of education, and I just wanted to mention to you that this is a public forum, so you might just wish to know that anything you say today could be used in a court case. That notwithstanding, you are welcome to say whatever you like.

GILLES MARLEAU

M. Marleau : Merci beaucoup, M^{me} la Présidente. Mon nom est Gilles Marleau. J'ai des intérêts dans le conseil scolaire de langue française, section catholique et section publique, puisque j'ai des enfants dans les deux secteurs de ce conseil regroupé. J'aimerais remercier les membres du comité, vous-même et monsieur le greffier, qui a bien voulu accepter que je vienne témoigner devant vous au sujet du financement de l'éducation aux niveaux primaire et secondaire en Ontario.

Je tiens à vous faire remarquer que je tiens à m'adresser à vous en tant que membres de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, et cela en dehors de toute partisanerie politique. L'heure est grave en ce qui a trait à l'éducation en Ontario. Les défis que pose la compétition internationale pour notre économie et les problèmes sociaux engendrés souvent par une préparation inadéquate de nos jeunes à faire face aux

responsabilités de la vie d'aujourd'hui et au monde du travail sont pour nous autant de rappels de l'importance de l'éducation en notre temps.

Si vous pensez que l'éducation des jeunes coûte cher, détrompez-vous : l'analphabétisme et l'incompétence sont encore bien plus coûteux et désastreux. Établir en Ontario l'égalité des chances en éducation, ce n'est pas seulement une question d'équité et de justice. Cela rapporte bien.

Je disais que l'heure est grave en ce qui a trait à l'éducation en Ontario. Je le répète et le maintiens davantage, eu égard au fait que tous ne sont pas égaux devant la loi ; tous n'ont pas droit aux mêmes bénéfices de la loi en ce qui a trait à l'accès aux ressources dans le domaine de l'éducation en Ontario. Les francophones, et les catholiques en particulier, sont nettement désavantagés par les lois ontariennes qui se rapportent au financement de l'éducation au niveau primaire et secondaire, et cela malgré les garanties qui leur sont offertes dans la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982 et dans la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.

Il est particulièrement déconcertant de noter que près de six ans après l'entrée en vigueur de la Charte des droits et libertés, l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario ait adopté le projet de loi 109, le présent chapitre 47 de 1988, portant création d'un conseil scolaire de langue française dans la municipalité régionale d'Ottawa-Carleton, avec le mode de financement que nous connaissons en sa partie IV.

Je m'étais pourtant présenté, le 25 mai 1988, devant le Comité permanent des affaires sociales, qui étudiait le projet de loi 109, pour attirer l'attention des membres de ce comité sur le caractère discriminatoire, voire même carrément raciste, des articles 17 et 18 de la partie IV de ce projet de loi.

Dans la discussion qui a suivi mon exposé, un député alla jusqu'à dire : « Mr Marleau, you are dead right, » alors que la plupart des autres députés présents hochaient la tête en signe d'approbation.

Ce qui surprend encore plus, c'est que lorsque fut venu le temps d'étudier le projet de loi 109 article par article, personne ne proposa d'amendement pour corriger les passages nettement discriminatoires et non constitutionnels de ce projet de loi. A ce jour, je ne peux m'expliquer cela.

Il y a d'autres bonnes façons de procéder dans notre province. Alors que je préparais ce mémoire pour votre comité spécial qui se penche sur le financement de l'éducation, j'apprends que

le Comité permanent des affaires économiques et financières tient de son côté des audiences sur le projet de loi 20, Loi assurant le versement de redevances relatives à l'aménagement de biens-fonds, qui, s'il devient loi, aura de profondes répercussions sur la façon de financer l'éducation en Ontario.

Quoiqu'il en soit, nous pouvions toujours espérer qu'un jour, lorsque le temps des réformes serait venu, nos législateurs s'y mettraient vraiment pour que justice soit faite. Il n'en est rien. Les propositions annoncées dans le budget de mai dernier, si elles apportent quelques améliorations au sort des francophones et des catholiques en matière de financement de leurs établissements scolaires, n'en demeurent pas moins très en-deçà de ce qui doit être fait pour établir un régime de financement de l'éducation, au niveau élémentaire et secondaire, qui soit en accord avec les lois constitutionnelles des francophones, qu'ils appartiennent au secteur public ou catholique.

Encore une fois, ce qui est proposé ne fait rien pour enrayer le régime discriminatoire qui existe présentement en Ontario en ce qui a trait au financement de l'éducation au niveau élémentaire et secondaire. On maintient le système discriminatoire basé sur des exceptions, des exclusions et des « oui, mais... »

Alors, c'est à vous que je fais appel. S'il en est parmi vous qui avez à cœur la constitution du Canada; s'il en est parmi vous qui, comme moi, ne pouvez plus souffrir l'injustice; s'il en est parmi vous qui croyez que mes enfants – et, pour certains d'entre vous peut-être, même vos propres enfants – ont le droit d'accéder aux mêmes ressources, ont le droit à l'égalité des chances en matière d'éducation; alors, je vous exhorte de parler fort. L'avenir de ma province, de notre province, en dépend. Merci beaucoup.

Mme la Présidente : Merci. Nous avons plusieurs minutes pour des questions de la part des députés. Avez-vous des questions ?

M. Furlong : Premièrement, je voudrais savoir – Vous avez entendu l'avertissement de M^{me} la Présidente – Je pense que vous avez une cause devant la Cour suprême. Je voudrais savoir, avant de poser des questions, si vous êtes ici avec la permission – peut-être pas la permission, peut-être que ce n'est pas le bon mot – de votre avocat.

1210

M. Marleau : Je sais à quoi j'ai à faire face. Je prends mes propres responsabilités et je répondrai à vos questions dans la mesure du possible.

M. Furlong : O.K. Je voudrais savoir – Je crois que la cause porte sur – Je pense que vous dites que vos enfants n'auront pas une bonne éducation parce que le financement de l'éducation, dans le cas du conseil de langue française, n'a pas les mêmes ressources pour financer l'éducation. Est-ce que c'est cela ?

M. Marleau : Ce que je dis, c'est que le Conseil de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton n'a pas accès aux mêmes ressources que, disons, les conseils scolaires anglophones publics.

M. Furlong : Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner votre préférence sur la sorte de changement aux finances qui pourrait vous aider, peut-être pas à changer d'idée, mais pour dire que vos enfants vont avoir une bonne éducation – Vous savez maintenant que les finances, de la manière dont elles sont calculées – Il faudrait savoir si vous pouvez proposer des changements pour que cela devienne acceptable pour vous.

M. Marleau : Mes enfants et le conseil de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton ont droit aux mêmes ressources financières que les anglophones du secteur public.

Vous connaissez le système actuel; vous connaissez les modes de financement actuels. Si vous avez de la difficulté à voir où il y a des injustices, quand c'est écrit « francophone », mettez le mot « anglophone » et faites le contraire; quand c'est écrit « école séparée », mettez « école publique » et faites le contraire : vous allez voir tout de suite les inégalités. C'est comme porter des lunettes spéciales.

Si on faisait le transfert en lisant les lois actuelles, on verrait tout de suite, cela sauterait aux yeux comme on dit, où sont les inégalités. Les lois actuelles sont basées sur des exclusions, sur des injustices flagrantes. Elles ne sont pas difficiles à percevoir. Tout ce que je demande, c'est qu'on rende les choses justes. Vous savez comment le faire.

M. Furlong : Merci.

Mme la Présidente : Merci, M. Furlong.

Do any other members have questions?

Merci, M. Marleau, pour votre présentation et votre contribution à notre comité aujourd'hui.

M. Marleau : Merci.

The Chairman : The select committee on education stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon in this room.

Just before you go, I would ask anybody who has made use of the translation devices this morning, please leave them here before you go. I am not sure whether we will have any French presentations this afternoon, but we would like those returned. Thank you.

The committee recessed at 1214.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1334 in Provinces I Ballroom, Westin Hotel, Ottawa.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to convene this afternoon's session of the select committee on education, as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario.

Our first presentation this afternoon will be from the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Could you come forward, please.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are very pleased to have your input to our committee this afternoon. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, and it would be most appreciated if you could leave part of that time for questions from the members. I notice that you have an extremely extensive brief, and I assume, since half an hour would not even begin to cover this, that perhaps you will be précising the information in here. That is a not-so-gentle hint.

Mr Mahoney: Otherwise we will book another day.

The Chairman: That is right. Another week.

Perhaps you would introduce yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

RENFREW COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Egan: My name is Tom Egan. I am a trustee with the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and chairman of the finance committee of that board. On my left is John Stunt, director of education. On my immediate right is David Marcus, superintendent of business, and on my extreme right, Mrs Norma Valiquette, trustee and vice-chairperson of the board and chairperson of the French language section.

Madam Chairperson, as you alluded to, this is our brief, but I assure you that I will not be reading all of it. The majority of it is for backup information.

On behalf of the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the future of educational financing. We find it reassuring that in the letter from your clerk, the first item he refers to is the equity of educational financing. Equity is our concern

also, but we see very little evidence of it in educational financing.

We have made many presentations as a board, or jointly with the Renfrew County Board of Education, to the Honourable Bette Stephenson, the Honourable Sean Conway and the MacDonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education. Unfortunately, these presentations, while accepted graciously, have not resulted in equity or even any substantial movement towards equity. There is not time to go into the details of these previous presentations, but we have enclosed copies of these previously submitted briefs as part of our presentation. We would like, however, to comment on some areas of concern.

Assessment: The government's announcement that the separate school boards of Ontario will be entitled to a share of corporate assessment is indeed a welcome change. The acceptance by the government that separate school boards are entitled to this assessment is a great step forward. However, in the opinion of our board, this pooling of assessment should have been on a province-wide basis. The proposed legislation allows the assessment-rich areas to retain their assessment bases. In these areas, the public and separate school boards will share the riches. In assessment-poor areas like Renfrew county, the public and separate school boards will share the poverty. This is not equity.

Lot levies: Again, a door has been opened for the rich areas to gain additional revenues, areas where subdivisions and lots are being created at a breakneck pace, areas where residential lots are priced at \$4,000 per frontage foot, almost \$250,000 for a full-size lot. In Renfrew county there is very little development, and full-size lots sell for as little as \$8,000 to \$10,000, not per frontage foot, but for the whole lot. The potential revenue for us is extremely limited, and in some municipalities, nonexistent. Again, the boards in the growth areas have an advantage. This is not equity.

1340

Provincial initiatives: There is an obvious trend by the provincial government to introduce mandatory programs in the educational system without adequate, if any, financing. In many cases where funding is initially adequate, it is subsequently withdrawn. The proposal for full-day kindergarten is a prime example of how

boards like ours find themselves in a catch-22 situation.

As of September this year, the board has three schools where the combined junior and senior kindergarten classes have enrolments of less than 15 pupils. Obviously, with this type of enrolment, funding is not adequate to cover the costs and the taxpayers must subsidize these programs. If we are required to increase these to a full-day program, even if grants double, subsidization will double. In schools where we have a large junior and senior kindergarten enrolment, we will not have the space to accommodate these pupils if full-time becomes a reality; obviously a lose-lose situation for our board and all similar rural and assessment-poor boards.

The ministry has taken an initiative in reducing class size at the primary level and some grants are available to cover this. However, this creates three problems:

1. The grants will not continue. This means that the board will be responsible for paying for five extra teachers at an approximate annual cost of \$225,000. This would amount to seven local mills, on average, to each ratepayer in Renfrew county.

2. By reducing class size, this will increase the number of classrooms required, and we do not have classrooms available.

3. To accommodate smaller class sizes at the primary level, class size in the upper grades has been increased. This obviously will lead to dissatisfaction within the teaching staff at the upper levels. We can expect that reduced class size at levels above primary will be an important item at the negotiating table. We do not have the funds to pay the salaries for extra teachers, nor the classroom space to accommodate the students.

Other programs such as drug education and affirmative action have been mandated, and these further strain the already limited financial resources of the board. We are not questioning the value of these initiatives to the students and society in general. However, how do we pay for them in an area like Renfrew county? This is not equity.

It is interesting to note that some grants, for example, grades 1 and 2 class reduction grants, are paid at 100 per cent. No consideration is given to a board's ability to pay. This is not equity.

Additional cost to school boards: The provincial government has announced an OHIP-funded payroll tax in 1990. At present, the board contributes approximately \$141,000 per annum

to employee OHIP premiums. Under proposed legislation, the board will pay \$339,000 per annum, or an increase of \$198,000. If this is not funded by the provincial government by way of grants, it will cost the average separate school ratepayer in Renfrew county approximately six local mills.

While it is not the initiative of the provincial government, the federal government sales tax proposals could substantially inflate the board's costs. Will the provincial government be supplying assistance to boards? If the provincial government does not take action to offset these costs, money will have to come from the education of our pupils. This will only increase the inequity.

Goods and services weighting factor: As stated previously, our board, in conjunction with the Renfrew County Board of Education, has made numerous presentations to the Ministry of Education, the Honourable Bette Stephenson, the Honourable Sean Conway and the Macdonald commission. These were on the matter of the goods and services weighting factor. It is our belief that Renfrew county is unfairly and unreasonably denied access to the funds produced by this weighting factor. The goods and services weighting factor is received by all northern Ontario boards and several southern Ontario boards. We have supplied extensive documentation that unequivocally proves that we have all the geographic, demographic and climatic conditions to justify the boards of Renfrew county receiving the weighting factor.

It is estimated that our board would have received approximately \$1.5 million in extra grants in 1989 if we were eligible for the goods and services weighting factor. Fairness demands that we receive this grant, and if equity in financing means anything, we must receive this grant.

In conclusion, we thank the members of the select committee for the opportunity to appear before them. We have supplied to you our previous submissions to various committees. My comments today, and our previous submissions, have one theme: the pupils of Renfrew county and the people of Renfrew county deserve equality of educational opportunities. We believe that it is the responsibility of the government of the province of Ontario to assure that this is supplied and supplied in such a way as not to inflict financial hardship on the taxpayers of the county.

We have every confidence that we can do the job, but we must have the resources. Our people

must not be penalized by the fact that they have chosen to live and raise their families in Renfrew county. We believe in equity in educational financing, but we have not seen it in the past or in the present. We can only hope that it will become a reality in the near future.

The Chairman: Thank you. We have several members who have indicated they would like to ask a question. We will start with Mr Keyes, followed by Mr Johnston.

Mr Keyes: Mr Egan, thank you very much for the document. It is going to be interesting to read through the submission since I have not been a member on any of the occasions when you would have made these other presentations. It is good evening reading perhaps for some of us after we finish our day's duties.

In the context of what you are presenting here, are you really suggesting that it would be far superior if there was a total pooling by the province of all sources of revenue, of resources? We are looking at alternative means of financing. You have not touched on the issue of whether you think getting away from property tax and going to income tax is something that should be considered.

Nor have you specifically referred to overall pooling of commercial-industrial assessment. It might be an interesting comment from your members in regard to the French-language area, because it has been suggested a number of times this morning that they feel there is, how will I say, unequal access to that assessment. It would seem that the only way to combat that would be through a provincial-wide pooling of commercial and industrial assessment.

Mr Egan: Maybe I will allow Mr Marcus to speak to that.

Mr Marcus: On the question of changing the method of financing from property taxes to income taxes, the board has not considered that as a possibility. I think it is fair to say that we fought long enough just to get a share of commercial assessment, without worrying about changing the whole darned system. However, as I say, it has not been considered.

It is obvious to this board that the province-wide sharing of commercial assessment is an absolute necessity. We faced a 17 per cent increase in mill rate this year and we are approximately \$100 per pupil over ceiling, whereas some boards can be very comfortable spending \$800, \$1,000 or \$1,100 over ceiling. That is because of their assessment base. We do not have that assessment base.

Mr Keyes: Could I ask Mrs Valiquette if she would support that for the sake of the French-language area, that commercial-industrial assessment should all be collected provincially and then redistributed on a formula?

Mrs Valiquette: Because we are such a minority, we have never really covered that subject at all in the area, so I really cannot touch the subject.

Mr Keyes: Going back then to Mr Egan, you have not suggested it in the brief, but it seems inherent in the inequities that you point out that you do not agree with the equalized assessment program that the government applies, taking into account the differences in assessment in various counties. Can you tell us whether your counties, or the municipalities in your counties, are basically on market value assessment?

Mr Marcus: No, we are not basically on market value. We have not evaluated the question of grants below ceiling and we do not at this point want to question the fact that the grants are equal below ceiling. It is when we get above ceiling that we have a problem. I can only assume, and the board can only assume, that the equalization factors are reasonably fair. But as you realize, once you get above ceiling, we carry the whole can, and that can is getting darned heavy.

Mr Keyes: I just was not sure from the way you have presented it that you were referring to that above ceiling. That is what you are referring to.

Mr Marcus: That is the problem and, of course, if the goods and services weighting factor came out long, that would increase our ceiling and therefore increase our grants.

Mr Keyes: Would you just elaborate a little further on the goods and services weighting factor that you feel deals inequitably with you?

Mr Marcus: It deals inequitably because we do not receive it. It applies to boards in northern Ontario. Technically speaking, it refers to north of the French River. Those municipalities that do not have a population centre in excess of 25,000 get nine per cent and those above get six per cent. There are other counties in southern Ontario—and I call them southern because they are calling us southern, even though they are in some cases further south than we are, such as Haliburton. That is the map. I think it clearly illustrates the situation.

1350

This was obviously created, I think, to entice teachers to northern Ontario by giving the boards

more grants. If you have studied the grids, you are quite aware there is not that much variation between grids in northern and southern Ontario. Consequently, given that we are similar geographically, demographically and climatically to these northern or pseudo-northern boards, we believe we are entitled to it. Much of your evening reading will be about that, I do not question.

Mr Keyes: I have one other question, probably to the director. In two areas you mention that in order to accommodate the reduced class sizes in the primary grades, you have had to increase class sizes in other ones. I wonder if you could give me any idea whether they have gone beyond the recommended class sizes for your junior and intermediate grades.

Then a second response to that, when you talk about enrolment being less than 15 for junior and senior kindergarten, do you have a policy within the board that prohibits family grouping within your schools to accommodate that? I go back to the days of family grouping in my school where I taught grades 1 to 8. I fail to understand why boards cannot accommodate such situations by having your junior kindergarten, your senior kindergarten, your grade 1 and grade 2, if need be, in order to provide them access to education.

Mr Stunt: Again, we have taken that to the full extreme and we operate a one-room school in the community of Griffith.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Isn't it the only one left?

Mr Stunt: It is the only one left.

Mr Jackson: You should get the grant just for that.

Mr Stunt: Yes.

Mr Keyes: I am glad to hear it.

Mr Stunt: We have several schools in which that kind of grouping does exist. We have three other schools that would be two- and three-room schools.

With respect to the question of the class size in the junior division, yes, we do have a policy of an average of 30 pupils. We try to keep our classes no more than that. In the junior and intermediate divisions, the shift to students upward has created quite a strain on that. We are operating classes in a number of municipalities that are considerably higher than 30.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This was an area I was going to ask you about. It seems to me it begs a question to the ministry for more information. A number of us were presuming that the grades 1 and 2 definition of where the reduction in class size would be would necessarily push boards to

increase the size of some of the higher grades. I think most of us presume that might happen at the intermediate level, rather than at the other part of the primary section. I wonder if we can get some statistics on just what has happened in these last two years.

We have seen that in fact there has been compliance with the goals for the 1 and 2 reductions because of the incentives that are there for that. But has that caused boards to have to make the kind of decisions that you have made in having class sizes higher than that? It would be interesting to get some statistical analysis of that, because surely that is not the point of what we were trying to do and something that some of us warned against when it happened.

Perhaps I could give notice that we would like that kind of data developed on a province-wide basis so that we can see how this particular provincial initiative has impacted on boards. It would be interesting to have it.

The Chairman: Perhaps Mr Brumer and also Dr Perry, who are here, could see whether this information is available and obtain it for the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I enjoyed your correspondence with your local member, who now is again the Minister of Education (Mr Conway). I hope you have better luck with him this time than you have had in the past.

Mr Jackson: He keeps getting reappointed until he does it right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is right. At least you now know how he is accountable anyhow, now that he is back to being the Minister of Education. I wish you luck with it.

What is the present percentage of your operating funding that comes from the provincial government versus local dollars? Offhand, do you know approximately in percentage terms?

Mr Marcus: I cannot give you that right offhand.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it in the range of 80 per cent?

Mr Marcus: Yes, we are fairly high.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was just the range I was trying to look for. When we look at the equity context you are putting things in, that of course has to be one of the other factors that is taken into account. We have this problem of accountability, as I see it, where the local board is the front line responsible for answering the quality-of-education questions of the local taxpayers, yet your actual financial accountability for the overall system is limited. As you say, your

ability to be able to go over ceiling is substantially limited as well.

You are in a double bind when you then try to explain to your local ratepayer why it is that you are not going to be able to move to full-day kindergarten as quickly as some other area, etc. I do not know how we are going to come to grips with this. I keep asking questions about how we can have the accountability more directly understandable to the electorate than it is presently. Do you have any thoughts for us on that?

Mr Marcus: The only thought is that our sources of revenue are of course limited. Assessment is limited. The fact that other boards that border on our board can spend hundreds and hundreds of dollars per pupil more than we can obviously causes pressure. Obviously, there are the statements regarding equality of education that come out from various governments of all political stripes, and that have continually come out. The people in Renfrew county have seen some of that, but by God, they have paid for it with their property taxes.

We would like to have that kind of assessment base and we would like to have the goods and services weighting factor that says we are entitled to the money, given our circumstances, given our low assessment. Below ceiling, I do not think we can argue with that. Below ceiling, I think we would all say it is as fair as it can be; there are obviously going to be inequities. But once you get up to that ceiling, and I defy you to find a board that is living within ceiling on a constant basis, we have a problem.

Mr Keyes: We found four.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We found four, but they all have weighting factors that make sure the reality is such that they are above ceiling, so I think that is an excellent point.

In large political terms, it strikes me that if we look at some of the tax revolt malaise that seems to be right across the country at the moment, at the root of the discontent in the past has been the notion of the property tax, specifically around education. Now it is being exacerbated by actions by provincial and federal governments and it is really coming to a head, but some of the malaise of that is based around the notion of the property tax paying for education to the degree it does.

I am not sure from reading your account how much that would actually change, even if there were province-wide, industrial-commercial assessment. Have you done any analysis of that in terms of what break there might be for the average senior citizen living in Pembroke who is

on a fixed income and is finding his property tax for education going up year after year? Have you done any analysis of what kind of relief there might be for them?

Mr Marcus: I must admit that the analysis is rather cynical, in that I do not believe, certainly from the figures we have seen, that pooling of assessment will bring us up too far, but it will bring a lot of people back down again. Hopefully, those people who are living in their present riches will join us in leaning on all you people to get appropriate funding. I am sorry; that is political and that is cynical, but that is the way I have to look at it. Once you spread that money throughout the province, it is not going to mean a lot to us. It will mean something and it will help—there is no question about that—but I think it will put us all in the same boat and then maybe we will all have to row together.

1400

Mr R. F. Johnston: Somebody is going to have to do the bailing. I do not know who that is going to be.

Mr Keyes: That is usually the problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It has a hole in it.

The Chairman: The final questioner we have this afternoon is Mr Jackson. Maybe just on a personal note, I will say that Mr Jackson's comments about the current Minister of Education are his own personal opinion.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is Johnston. Mr Jackson would never say anything like that.

Mr Keyes: It is Johnston, not Jackson. He has not said a word yet.

The Chairman: I am sorry, Mr Jackson.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was born in Pembroke and as a result I am allowed to say whatever I want to say about Sean.

The Chairman: I apologize for that, Mr Jackson. I know you would never say anything like that about our current minister.

Mr Jackson: Don't bet on it.

The Chairman: I just wanted to mention that they do not necessarily reflect those of the balance of the members of the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: All those who want to be parliamentary assistants, at least.

Mr Jackson: I do believe that Sean Conway has been asked to become Minister of Education again until he gets the job right, so I want that on the record. Having said that, Mr Johnston covered many of the points I wanted to raise, so maybe I could delve briefly in the area of capital.

Could you share with the committee a sense of where you are at in terms of your post-Bill 30 accommodation needs. I have a sense of your geography and your enrolment, but what are the conditions like with the expansion and full funding, and how have you fared in the last four years with respect to capital in terms of addressing that? Then I have a question for you.

Mr Marcus: I want to address one thing you said, geography. It is always nice to make a comparison. We are bigger than Prince Edward Island. That is our geographic area.

On the question of capital funding, we have received a capital allocation of \$10 million for the addition to an existing English Catholic high school and provision for francophone students in that same high school. We are desperately pushing for additional money in the town of Renfrew where there is a very old building. It belongs to the diocese and is totally inadequate for a high school building under any criteria at all. It is a building that is old and does not have the facilities. If we are to offer education to the students who are entitled to it in a Catholic high school, which of course is all secondary students, then we must have capital funding for that building.

In the elementary area, most of our needs are retrofits. I would say that while we have received some moneys and one should be thankful for small mercies, we have not received adequate funding to cover those retrofits.

Mr Jackson: I read your presentation on Bill 20, both when I was on the committee and then again briefly now. I would like you to react, if you could, first in terms of what the impact has been in terms of the grant adjustment downwards, and second if your board is currently or will be considering deficit financing for the capital projects you are either committed to through the province or have initiated. Could you give us a sense of those two questions.

Mr Marcus: Obviously, the reduction in the ministry contribution has a tremendous impact. We have not quite felt it yet because we have not got that far in many projects. The second question was to do with—I am sorry.

Mr Jackson: Deficit financing; a reaction on approvals or on retrofits, renovations, anything of that nature.

Mr Marcus: The board plans that for any projects that are on the table now and are at any stage of approval for which we have allocation, we will have to debenture for the shortfall of funds. With respect to what effect that will have

five years from now or 10 years from now, since we do not know what the grants will be, nor what capital allocations there will be and how much we will add to that debenture by adding more debentures, we are to some degree forced to mortgage our future.

Mr Jackson: Are you currently debenturing and to what per cent of your total budget would you be debentured at the moment?

Mr Marcus: Well, we are not debenturing from the operating budget. We intend, probably within the next two years, to issue one all-encompassing debenture. It will be approximately \$3 million. That will be \$3 million out of total projects of probably about—I am guessing—in the middle teens of millions, \$15 million to \$16 million.

Mr Jackson: I really meant debt service for those debentures.

Mr Marcus: On a \$3-million debenture, one can assume \$300,000 a year.

Mr Jackson: On a total budget of how much?

Mr Marcus: Of \$33 million.

Mr Jackson: With respect to this goods and services weighting factor, you identified salaries, but does busing not come in under that in terms of an adjusted rate for your grants or are you at the northern grant rate for the busing subsidy?

Mr Marcus: I am glad you mentioned transportation because we did not mention that in our presentation. We are at present very comfortable with the transportation grants. We are within ceiling on transportation. However, we think the proposed changes can have a very serious impact. The changes are for an as-the-crow-flies type of transportation, for lack of a better term. Unfortunately, the crow is not flying kids over rivers, mountains and hills in Renfrew county, so while some of the distances would not be very far if the crow flew it, to have to drive it is a long distance. It is going to start costing us, there is no question about that.

There is also a rumour that the ministry is going to put in certain regulations regarding the age of school buses. I think that will guarantee that we will be dealing with a few large operators rather than the mom-and-pop shops out in the more sparsely populated areas of the county. I think there is an alternative to that. That simply is to make sure you do the proper mechanical checks and require them to be made.

Mr Jackson: As one who has had a lot of experience with school buses, I can assure you it will be welcome if we can get some of those

buses off the road. However, it is like any other matter when it comes to child safety. It will be interesting if the province wishes school boards to absorb all those higher, safer standards, or if there will be funds forthcoming.

In the past, at least up until this point, there has always been provincial funding to separate and public boards with respect to retrofit and upgrade in terms of children's safety with transportation. It will be very interesting to find out if in fact that cycle will be broken, if the rumour of the changes is true.

Mr Mahoney: I would like to tell you that I heard a rumour that Mr Conway requested to go back to the Ministry of Education because he enjoyed working with the critics of the opposition parties.

Mr Jackson: That is why he invited us to his first press conference.

Mr Mahoney: It seems that throughout your presentations in the past to Mr Conway and others you have emphasized very much the desire to be designated as a northern board. That would generate some substantial dollars through the goods and services weighting grant. There is a separate small school board grant you are interested in as well. That seems to be more or less the bent you are working on to improve your overall base. I can see how many of the other boards would perhaps support you if you were looking to seek their efforts to convince some of us that you indeed should be a northern board, based on nothing other than geography, from the map you have produced.

What do you say, however, to the municipalities that have all this wonderful flow of riches from commercial and industrial assessment but also have this wonderful flow of problems? In your own terms, they are producing subdivisions at breakneck speed. My own municipality in Mississauga is adding 20,000 new people every year, many of them children and many of them needing schools. With the stress they are under, I can assure you they would have apoplexy if we were to tell them that we were going to collect all their commercial-industrial assessment and send it to Renfrew county or other destinations around the province.

I am sure Carolyn Parrish and others within those municipalities, Durham and many other areas in the province, would cry foul because they feel very clearly that the commercial-industrial assessment generates jobs, which generates people who live and work in the community, which generates kids, which generates the need for schools. What do you tell us to

say to them if we are indeed to adopt a provincial pooling policy?

Mr Marcus: One of the advantages of being at our level is that we only worry about Renfrew county and you, being fortunate as you are, with a higher level of government, have to look at a more universal perspective.

Mr Mahoney: That is a fair comment.

Mr Marcus: It is not an answer. However, if one says there is equity, if one says there is equality, then there should be that. While it may create problems for some areas, we already have the problems. We are looking for the solutions.

1410

Mr Mahoney: I do not mean to be argumentative, but very much of what you are saying in this very excellent and detailed brief implies, in the lot levy analysis you have done, that there is not equity because these municipalities have all this money. I can tell you that they have all these problems. We have school sites with 25 portables sitting on them. So I am not so sure, when you say that if we were to do provincial pooling and redistribution on a provincial basis, that we would all be in the boat pulling together. I can tell you that there would be one heck of a fight in that boat.

Mr Marcus: I would like to address one thing you said and that is about lot levies. We are not saying there should not be lot levies in Metropolitan Toronto or Hamilton or Ottawa. What we are saying is, do not say that is the solution for us and do not adjust the whole capital grant plan because these boards have all these lot levies. We just do not have any. That is a unique situation for them and that is great, but what we are saying is, do not adjust the whole capital grant plan and say, "Okay, now it's 60 per cent because there are all these lot levies," because all these lot levies are not in Renfrew county. That is what I am saying.

On the pooling of assessment, I understand your problem, but I hate to tell you, it is your problem.

Mr Mahoney: I fully recognize it is my problem, which is why I frankly would not support province-wide pooling of that assessment, but—

Mr Jackson: You did share the reduced grant.

Mr Marcus: Yes. As Mr Jackson pointed out, we did share the reduced grant, which was very generous of us.

Mr Mahoney: I should just point out by way of a final comment—I know you want to get going, Madam Chairman—that the lot levy—

Mr Jackson: I am rather enjoying the line of questioning, Steve.

Mr Mahoney: I can go on longer, Cam, any time you want. The lot levy issue is clearly permissive and we are not forcing it on any board, but I understand that you do not have the development to generate the income and so it is not necessarily a solution for you.

The Chairman: I suppose you could always do what we do when we are in this turmoil of who to blame. We blame it on the feds. So we will pass your comments on to them. Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Our next delegation will be from the Nepean Symphony Orchestra. Welcome back to our committee, Mr Wegg. We are always happy to hear from the Nepean Symphony Orchestra. Please begin whenever you are ready. I believe all members have a copy of Mr Wegg's brief.

NEPEAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Mr Wegg: The year is 2000. A co-operative miracle has occurred. This miracle stemmed from the first report of the select committee on education, released in December 1988, which recommended on page 3:

"Such an expanded social mandate and changing demands on schools mean that achieving the goals of education cannot be solely the responsibility of the educational system. The ministry, boards and schools must work with other ministries, relevant agencies, service providers and other concerned groups in the community."

As a concerned group in the community, the Nepean Symphony Orchestra, in its education programs, has striven for the past 15 years to provide programs that are available to all ages and backgrounds and hence is in support of the committee's view that, as the committee said last year, also from page 3, "We see learning as a life-long and continuing process and believe the goals of the system must be adjusted accordingly."

When I appeared before this committee last year, I was challenged by you to see what could be done regarding music education. Today, I would like to respond to that challenge by presenting a vision of the future that will serve as a starting point, stemming from the thrust of last year's recommendations. Clearly, this vision rests on the broad topic of funding.

On then to the future. It is 15 September in the year 2000.

At the official opening of the Ottawa-Carleton Music Resource Centre were representatives of the agencies, governments and groups responsi-

ble for its completion. The list included the Minister of Education, the five chairmen of the local school boards, the mayor of Nepean, the chairman of the Ontario Arts Council, the president of the Nepean Symphony Orchestra, the director general of the National Arts Centre and the president of FM99.

Before touring the facility, each of the representatives made a few remarks.

The Minister of Education: "I am pleased to be here at the opening of a building that initially came from the recommendations of the select committee on education's 1989 report. I recall that in 1989, as then Education critic, I felt this project seemed unlikely to materialize"

Mr Jackson: I am taking even bets on that one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It will have to be, Cam, because I am leaving politics.

Mr Wegg: So noted—"as it required the co-operation and financial resources of a host of diverse agencies and groups. Having achieved this remarkable accomplishment, the ministry will be closely monitoring the progress of this centre in hopes of developing similar ones in other areas of the province. I feel confident that our investment of 50 per cent of the building's costs will prove to be an excellent investment."

The chairman of the Carleton Board of Education: "I must admit that I really did not see the need for this facility when we were approached to become involved with it in early 1990. Now, 10 years later, I know that, like numbers and words, music is a language that we as educators need to make available to our students. The pilot courses that we sponsored as part of the feasibility study over the past decade demonstrated to me that our kids find that getting high on music is far better than using chemical means.

"Sharing the remaining 50 per cent of the building costs among the five boards has certainly made our financial participation possible; indeed, remarkably inexpensive. This facility will continue to save all of us money by avoiding needless duplication of services and resources. This is particularly true in the area of continuing education, which as all of us know has increased dramatically in the last decade."

The mayor of Nepean: "On behalf of council and the citizens of Nepean, indeed the entire region, I am pleased to be part of this most special project. As well as the select committee on education's previous recommendation, we in Nepean recommended that this kind of co-

operative project be studied in our own report of May 1989, which said on page 32:

"(b) A second alternative, in which the city and the Carleton Board of Education would work co-operatively, would in our view provide an exciting solution to the problem of accommodating artistic groups in the community at the same time as it could provide a wealth of new educational opportunities for the city's adolescent population."

"The comprehensiveness of this facility will become more evident to you during the tour. Even though we have a proven track record of supporting the arts, we could not have done this on our own, with so many requests for our own limited resources; indeed, none of us could. None the less, we are proud to have contributed the 10 acres of land required for this centre."

The chairman of the Ontario Arts Council: "In looking back through the files regarding the Nepean Symphony, I have noticed its steady growth since we began supporting the orchestra through operating grants in 1976. In my research I came across a letter by the associate music officer of the day, Michael LaLeune, which sums up well the many reasons for the council's continued interest. I quote Mr LaLeune:

"The NSO operates under its aegis a large number of valuable community services. These include the Ottawa-Carleton Summer Orchestra, the Symphony School, two youth orchestras, a six-week youth summer camp and the Canadian Composers' Forum. An activity for which our advisers and I would praise the orchestra is its educational school concerts. Few orchestras commit this level of resources to the development of young audiences and the audiences of tomorrow. An orchestra is the centre of musical activity in its community. The importance it plays in the cultural and social fabric cannot be easily calculated. Among other things, the NSO provides resources for the training of young musicians, avenues of expression for the gifted amateur, the development of Canadian musical expression and artistic collaboration with other local groups.'" This is from a letter of 25 May 1989 from Michael LaLeune.

Back to the chairman: "As you can see from Mr LaLeune's comments, the NSO has had a long history of community service. We at the council know that their past history, combined with this facility, will see even more community involvement in music. We are equally pleased to be associated with this building in the form of programming grants for their composer-in-residence and video projects, to name just two.

This entire project speaks well for the future of art, both here and in the province of Ontario."

The president of the Nepean Symphony Orchestra: "Today is truly a miracle of co-operation. As you know, the NSO has been concerned with all facets of music education since we began in 1974. While we knew that we did not have the financial resources to ever consider building such a facility ourselves, we have never lost our desire to find a way to see it materialize. In that sense, we are proud to have been the catalyst that has brought us all together for the cause of education and music. We look forward to the outcomes of a facility that, for the first time, will enable our musicians and teachers, working together with the teachers and students of all the boards, to create a healthy musical environment."

The director general of the National Arts Centre: "The focus of this building on music speaks well for the health of all groups engaged in the art of music in the Ottawa-Carleton region. While our mandate at the NAC is mainly national, we very much encourage the fostering of the love of music locally."

The president of FM99: "As you know, even though our station is a pop-rock format, for the past nine years we have devoted two hours a week to the Understanding Music series. This program, hosted by the music director of the NSO, has been syndicated to several other markets and has kindled a real awareness in all types of classical music in many people. For quite a few, this program was their first exposure. We are proud to be associated with this project, not only in the development of the recording studio in the facility but by offering a number of scholarships to needy students."

1420

Following these remarks, there was a tour of the facility. The following day, 16 September 2000, this article appeared in the *Globe and Mail*:

"Nepean (CP)—The cause of music received a dramatic boost yesterday with the opening of the Ottawa-Carleton Music Resource Centre. The centre will provide a vast array of music services to residents of the Ottawa-Carleton region, from preschoolers to seniors.

"Activities include private music lessons, youth orchestras, composition workshops, conducting workshops, recitals, seminars, music therapy and several more.

"The facilities for these activities are all first-rate, with rehearsal rooms, sheet music library, sound library and listening room, recording studio and recital hall.

"The courses are offered for credit in conjunction with local school boards and community colleges or noncredit for those who just want to improve their skills or understanding.

"The centre also has an extensive outreach program where many courses or workshops are presented in the schools of the entire region.

"The entire cost of this complex was shared by the province, local school boards and the local municipality, making it financially possible. The savings to each of the funders will also be considerable. For example, a central band library would be available to all schools in the region at a fraction of the cost of maintaining hundreds of individual ones.

"This complex was produced and conceived by local and provincial governments at the urging of the Nepean Symphony and is a testimony to what can happen through co-operation and common cause. Its beginnings followed a recommendation from the select committee on education in 1989 that 'a feasibility study be launched to examine and flesh out a proposal for a music resource centre that would combine the talents of local school boards and local professional musicians in an effort to restore the place of music in the educational process.'"

Today, here, in 1989, this committee has been charged with looking to the future of education in Ontario. I have tried to show you, as we travelled in time to the year 2000, what could be. This is my response to the challenge made by you last year. Let us now take the next step to ensure that by all of us working together, the future will fulfil its promise. Thank you for your time.

The Chairman: Thank you for your very creative presentation today, although I think you struck fear and loathing into the hearts of many in the room when we thought of one of the Education critics becoming the Minister of Education. I would like to be back here in the year 2000 to be able to give my comments on the matter.

Mr Mahoney: I found this entertaining and interesting, but I must tell you that the Globe and Mail would never print such a good-news story. It is the first article I have seen allegedly written by the Globe that did not call for an inquiry. I congratulate you on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want to make it clear that I do not intend to be elected in the year 2000. Members do not have to be concerned about that sort of thing. You can all relax about that possibility and worry a little bit more about what this means if it is truly looking into the future.

It is a wonderful report, it is great and it follows very nicely from the things we were discussing in the past. I thank you for that.

One of the things we talk about a lot is accountability and that sort of thing. Capital funds are in fact the smallest problem, it seems to me, in setting up this kind of pilot project. The much larger difficulty is how you operate it and whom it is responsible to. I wonder if you have given any thought to that, because this is providing resources, you say, to the various boards, to the community colleges, etc. How would you envisage that working in terms of the overall responsibility for the operational costs?

Mr Wegg: I will just preface my comment by saying that I am much better at telling you what key it is in than how much it costs.

I made reference to the Ontario Arts Council, which is indeed just as interested in music education in the province as this body; I know there would be some opportunities there. I think we could see a certain amount of user fees involved. We could see some contribution from boards for specific programs that interest them most. This all comes from kicking the can around at a discussion.

The reference to FM99 is not a fabricated one. It is part of their application to the CRTC—I had the pleasure of appearing with them there last June—if they are given the nod, to find a way of making scholarship and programming money available and to get a proper recording system set up.

In fact, all the things I have mentioned here are not in the art of the impossible, save and except for putting them all together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You see this as external to the democratically elected educational accountability structures that we have rather than coming under the ambit of a regional board or that sort of thing.

Mr Wegg: I could imagine that in the normal school hours, say the nine-to-four time, the main programming would be accountable to and under the aegis of the boards involved. In the four-to-who-knows-when category, a lot of these other programs that go beyond a board's scope would in fact be possible. It strikes me as curious that in our own facility, such as it is now, during the daytime the rooms are virtually unused, and from four o'clock on you cannot get near one, whereas in many schools the exact opposite occurs. It seems to me this is a kind of misuse of space on both of our parts; is there a way of combining the two?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That clears it up for me, because I was wondering if you saw it more like the regional arts school kind of concept or whether you saw it as this kind of body.

The other thing that just brought to mind was the last group coming before us talking about disparities that exist between what various boards can provide because of lower tax bases and that sort of thing, distance, etc. What about that? The obvious places where you would try something like this would be the major metropolitan areas of Ottawa, Toronto, London, Hamilton and that sort of thing. But it certainly would not be the kind of thing that necessarily would be attempted in Wawa. I wonder how we deal with that whole matter.

If, as we have agreed in the past, music is vital to get back into the curriculum in a more significant way for all sorts of reasons, is doing what can be seen as a sort of cosmopolitan centre option a bit elitist and ignoring the real facts of basic education for a lot of the kids in the province?

Mr Wegg: I think I hinted at that ever so slightly when I commented about the outreach program that such a centre could have. I can see residencies in communities for, say, a week at a time. For example, I know the OAC is very interested in that kind of thing. Much of our work currently is done up and down the valley in Pembroke and Deep River as well, and I can see an opportunity for that to become a lot more co-ordinated and serving everyone.

Mrs O'Neill: Jim, it is good to see you looking much better than the last time I saw you. I am happy that you are hanging in and that the orchestra with which you are so closely associated is going to continue.

I really thank you from the bottom of my heart for this sense of vision. I do believe that a lot of this is possible. I have just come from a lunch where we were dealing in high-tech co-operation on two sides of the ocean, which I would suggest is more difficult to achieve than what you are suggesting here. It does take a lot of will at a lot of levels.

School and community, however, are tied so closely in your presentation, and as regards what you suggested about buildings—you and I have been talking about this kind of thing for 10 years or more—I am happy you brought that forward. I wondered if you could say a little bit about the year you have had the difficulty with. Have you been able to continue your program within the schools?

1430

Mr Wegg: Oh, you mean the regular school concerts. Perhaps not all the members know that we had our kick at the financial disaster can last year. It was Nepean's turn after Windsor and Thunder Bay. Who knows who might be next? But no, all the educational programs we have offered in the past are just as strong and hopefully will become stronger as time goes on.

Mrs O'Neill: And you still have your connection and your outreach with Deep River?

Mr Wegg: Yes, indeed.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. You have one term in here that I am not familiar with: band library. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

Mr Wegg: I expect in the bulk of the high schools certainly, and in many of the grade 7 and 8 classes, there is a library of music. Probably about five per cent of that music is actually used in a given year; but each year each school must purchase music so it has something to use. So we have all of these same pieces in various libraries, 90 per cent of which is frankly wasting everybody's money. Perhaps if there were a co-ordinated library where you call up your head and have a listing, and you can send out and it comes on the board courier bus, or whatever, (1) we would have a lot more music to choose from and (2) the cost savings would enable us to get into spending money better elsewhere.

It seems to me just one example of how money is needlessly spent, as I go around to different schools with our school concerts, and the libraries at each school are virtually duplications.

Mrs O'Neill: As you know, the boards in the area—four I am not sure about—the fifth school board now has been involved for some time in that media library.

Mr Wegg: Yes, I understand there is even now, as we speak, some hope that could happen. I pick on that one just as a quick "for instance."

Mrs O'Neill: It would be the beginning of a co-operative thinking scheme.

Mr Wegg: Oh, no question.

Mrs O'Neill: And I think that would be quite helpful.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would only be useful, though, if we got a guarantee to get rid of the score of Oklahoma from all the schools.

Mr Wegg: Since we have free trade, we have to play a lot of that sort of thing.

Mr Mahoney: Soon there won't be anything else but.

Mrs O'Neill: Have you talked in the community about this, or is this your unveiling of your new concept?

Mr Wegg: This is the official unveiling. I must say occasionally I get a little frustrated. I know none of my colleagues around the table ever do.

Mr Jackson: According to you, I have to wait 10 years before I can be Minister of Education.

Mr Wegg: Wait until you see the next one; see how you get there.

Last year, I remember walking away from the committee room, saying, "What was I just doing?" because a lot of the questioning and banter back and forth was, as you might recall: "Why don't you go and do something about it?" I thought I had come here to plead and beg to see that music could find its way back into the curriculum, and I thought I would perhaps come back this year, remind us of that and see what we can do about it.

Certainly, it would be much easier to get anything like this off the ground if it had the support of the province, from which it comes in the first place.

Mrs O'Neill: May I ask you, and this may be a supplementary to what Mr Johnston was asking you, how would this tie in with something like our school of the arts here under the OBE at Canterbury?

Mr Wegg: I can see that as kind of the centrepiece of what we do. I think there are a lot of things, as I mentioned last year, that need to be done to get us up to the high school level; but to somehow have everything in the same building, so to speak, and with the same thrust, from not just one board but all boards, excites me enormously.

Mrs O'Neill: So you are suggesting you might—and hopefully I will not be quoted on this, please—that could be a nucleus of what you are suggesting.

Mr Wegg: I do not see why not.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. I think I had better stop because, as you know, yesterday I asked one question too many, and I am on the verge of doing the same.

The Vice-Chairman: We will bail you out. Interjections.

Mr Jackson: I want to thank you for your brief because it did illustrate an important point about co-operation and within the brief some fiscal opportunities are presented to improve program at less cost.

Prior to today's hearings, we have discussed at length the potential problem of adverse reaction among property taxpayers and that school boards and the province are ill prepared to defend that we have in fact sought out proposals similar to the one that you have presented.

I have used examples of technical programs on a cosmopolitan basis and arts programs, but I have not used a music one. So, with your permission, I would like to utilize it and to give it fair circulation to illustrate the point. I think it is a very good one. I would just be anxious to know if you have had any feedback from separate and public boards about the concept of having students enrol in these programs—and/or private schools, which is the other part that excites me. This would allow a purchase-of-service agreement where the community and its contribution would embrace for the first time all students in the province. We would overcome that hurdle which currently exists when we only have coterminous co-operation.

Within that brief, if you do a revision, you might have some other embellishments in there which really complete the notion of equity and value for tax dollar raised, and improved access to quality programs for all children in this province. I think you are to be commended because you have really demonstrated less self-interest and more a sense of vision. We are not getting as much of that as we really should.

Mr Wegg: If I could just add to that, it does not say who the music director will be in 2000. Perhaps we could get together and find another line of employment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think maybe he could do that.

Mr Wegg: On one of the things that you just commented on—what would separate boards think as opposed to public boards—I have never asked the one about the other, but in all the things that we have done, we have done things with the separate board in terms of concerts and workshops, we have done things at the public board. Indeed, we had a couple of years where we taught the after-school music program at Ashbury College.

It just seemed to me, scratching my little head, that the Nepean Symphony is a nonboard thing. It is not an educational institution in the same sense that any of those three areas is. Here we were, working quite successfully with each of these three particular arms, so why could we not be the glue somehow to bring them all together, because the opportunities are just outstanding?

Mr Jackson: Just to close, I can tell you that in my own community of Burlington we are struggling with more of an elitist approach to about a \$12-million performing arts centre in which music has its main focus. Burlington, as you know, hosts the annual Sound of Music Festival in the home of the Burlington Teen Tour Band. That is the end of my commercial message. However, the project is floundering because it lacks that cohesive glue which you have just referenced.

When we talked to the consultants and I made presentations to the city fathers, I have sort of hinted around a concept. So I can tell you, for one, that this will be going to a consultant tomorrow to illustrate very clearly, because they had not even bothered to consider contacting the two school boards in terms of integrating a youth program component. To me, the project will die and a community that is very committed to music programming is not even benefiting from the potential to use taxpayers' dollars more efficiently and to improve. So I cannot underscore how pleased I am to receive this.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Wegg, for your very interesting and excellent brief. Thanks for coming.

Our next presenters are the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board, represented, I believe, by Bonnie Kehoe, the chairperson. I would ask Mrs Kehoe to introduce, for the purposes of Hansard, those folks who are here with her. We have set aside about 30 minutes for your presentation, which includes time for questions by the members. Begin whenever you are ready.

1440

OTTAWA ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mrs Kehoe: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to introduce, on my far left, our Director of Education George Moore, Trustee David Darwin, chairman of our management committee who will be presenting here today, and on my direct left Wayne Bishop, our finance manager. With your permission, Mr Chairman, I would like Trustee Darwin to give the presentation.

Mr Darwin: Mr Chairman and members of the committee, the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board welcomes this opportunity to meet with your committee to present its views on a number of issues affecting the financing of education.

On behalf of the board, I will be addressing nine issues, roughly grouped under the subjects of taxation, enrolment and government programs. Before doing so, the board wishes me to reiterate its support for the Ministry of Education and the government of Ontario for their efforts to ensure equality of education and resource opportunity for all students in the province.

Since 1984, the Ontario government has been reviewing the financing of elementary and secondary education. A number of significant changes have taken place which have had a major impact on this board, such as: the extension of funding to separate school boards, Bill 30; French-language governance, Bill 75; the creation of the Ottawa-Carleton French Language School Board, Bill 109.

The Ministry of Education in 1989 began to make changes to the education funding model to improve the equity of financial resources among school boards, to promote an understanding of education finance and to allow school boards time to plan more efficiently and effectively. Further initiatives can be expected.

At the same time, both the provincial and federal governments are making changes to health, immigration and tax policies that will place an increased burden on local taxation and severely restrict the board's ability to carry out its mandate of providing educational programs to prepare students for the demands of tomorrow's world.

Within this context of legislative funding and program changes are a number of issues affecting this board in particular and other separate school boards in the province.

There are three issues of concern to our board under the general heading of taxation. The first is the policy proposal by the government on the sharing of local education revenues between the two publicly funded school systems, public and separate.

This new policy was in three parts. It would permit Roman Catholic members of a business partnership to designate their school support to the separate school board in proportion to their interest in the partnership. It would require the property tax assessment of publicly traded corporations to be shared between coterminous public and separate school boards on the basis of each board's share of the residential and farm assessment in each municipality. It would require telephone and telegraph company receipts to be shared between public and separate school boards on the basis of each board's share

of the residential and farm assessment in each municipality.

This new policy is to be implemented as of 1 January 1990 and phased in over the next six years. Additional moneys are to be made available to ensure the public school system would not be adversely affected.

The Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board supports wholeheartedly this change in policy as it is one of the most significant commitments of the government on the extension of funding to the separate school system which began in September 1985. This is a major step towards equity in the financing of education in Ontario. Combined with the increase in the grant ceilings, this initiative will not only contribute to equalizing the balance of revenue between local boards, it will also ensure that assessment-poor boards, both public and separate, in areas of the province with little commercial assessment receive a more adequate share of provincial wealth. All students across the province will now have a more equal educational opportunity. The sharing of the local tax base will also allow this board to be more competitive with its coterminous board in the provision of educational programs.

In its brief to the Macdonald commission, the board's position was that this assessment should be distributed on the basis of enrolment. Enrolment is more reflective of a board's responsibilities for education. In our case, for example, we have 23 per cent of the area's enrolment but only 20 per cent of the residential and farm assessment. Therefore, our first recommendation is that the Ministry of Education ensure the appropriate legislation for the sharing of local education revenue is enacted by 1 January 1990, but that the distribution be on the basis of enrolment and not the residential and farm assessment.

The second issue, and one I believe the government is prepared to address very shortly if it has not done so already, is in the area of designation and assessment. Unless a Roman Catholic elects to support the separate school system by an action taken by that ratepayer, the assessment of the property automatically defaults to the public school system. A majority of people, when purchasing homes, do not consider the directing of assessment for school support. Therefore, their assessment would, by default, go to the public school system.

It is ironic that this is exactly what happened to one of our own trustees last month when he purchased a home. It was when we were going

over this point in the brief that he realized he had not declared support to the separate school system and rushed off to his lawyer to make sure it was done. That just shows you how easily this can transpire.

With the proposed sharing of local education revenues, the importance of the proper designation of residential assessment is increased. According to the policy, the sharing of corporate assessment is proposed to be based on the percentage of residential and farm assessment supporting the board. For this board, each dollar of residential assessment under the proposal would generate more than one dollar in commercial assessment. This makes it essential for separate school boards to ensure there is no loss of assessment by error or carelessness. This could be accomplished in several ways. However, we recommend:

1. That the Minister of Education advise the Minister of Revenue to have the Land Transfer Tax Act "Affidavit of Residence and of Value of the Consideration" form, form 1, redesigned to provide for the mandatory designation of school support at the time the property changes ownership.

2. That all nondeclared assessment be shared between the public and separate school systems, based on the ratio of those who do not declare their support.

3. That notice-of-assessment forms be sent each year to all occupants of properties that changed ownership to ensure proper designation of assessment.

The third issue I wish to address is the Development Charges Act, Bill 20, or as it is more popularly known, the lot levies bill. This act would give school boards and municipalities the option of establishing levies to cover the local share of growth-related capital projects. As part of this new policy, the provincial share of this cost would decrease from an average of 75 per cent to an average of 60 per cent.

I had the opportunity, along with other members of this board, to meet with the Honourable Robert Nixon in March to express our board's displeasure with this proposal. Those school boards which are located in areas of the province where there is little or no growth will have to pay a larger local share for the cost of new facilities, with no additional source of revenue other than the local mill rate.

The city of Ottawa has little or no room for growth, as it is surrounded on the east, west and south by Nepean and Gloucester and on the north by the Ottawa River. This board, along with most

other boards in the province, is in need of funds to build new facilities and to renovate and retrofit existing schools to meet today's education program requirements. The Ministry of Education has not made available sufficient funds to enable school boards to undertake these types of projects in the past several years.

Since the government is proceeding with the Development Charges Act to allow school boards to collect moneys to build new schools in growth-related areas, the board recommends that the Ministry of Education make available more moneys to school boards in nongrowth areas for the building, renovation and retrofitting of schools to meet the educational demands of today's world.

Having addressed these three taxation-related issues, I would like to turn to three issues dealing with enrolment: the kindergarten programs, pupil loading and the infamous memorandum B2.

In the speech from the throne on 25 April 1989, the government announced that all school boards will have to offer half-day junior kindergarten for four-year-olds, as well as half-day programs for senior kindergarten. Also, funding would be provided for school boards to offer full-day senior kindergarten programs where classroom space permits, possibly beginning with the 1990-91 school year and phased in over five years.

This enhanced kindergarten program will help relieve, no doubt, the day care problem that is now facing the province. However, it will contribute to the teacher shortage that a number of school boards are now experiencing. Our board will have to hire at least 20 additional teachers if it is to implement a full-day senior kindergarten program. The board expects parents will demand this option be implemented.

Unless the government increases the funding beyond the current level, this initiative will place a heavy burden on the local taxpayer. At the current time, the Ministry of Education pays only 39 per cent of the cost of elementary education for this board.

We therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education and the government proceed with caution on this issue and, if implemented, ensure:

1. That adequate and continuing funding is made available to school boards.
2. That steps be taken to ensure there are sufficient competent teachers available to meet the increase in kindergarten programs.

3. That a capital allocation be made available to boards for renovations to schools to provide the needed facilities.

1450

If I might be allowed to digress for a moment, I would like to stress the wording of the first part of this recommendation; that is, the words "adequate and continuing funding." It is with great interest I read the remarks of one of your committee members recorded recently in Hansard. The remarks are, I believe, only slightly out of context, as the member was addressing the heritage languages bill rather than the kindergarten question. However, the comment seemed valid here.

I quote: "...a lot of governments suffer from the problem of starting programs and not sufficiently extending the necessary funding.... I suggest this is a problem school boards have faced for many years, but nobody is sitting back and taking stock of the sum total of all these programs that have been entered into for very sound political/educational reasons. But then the funding seems to narrow, dry up or evaporate, and the local taxpayer is left to pick up the whole tab."

The member continues later: "...yet there is still, across this province, extensive use of Dittos and textbooks that are outdated. The core programs in our schools require a major influx of tax dollars in order to make sure our regular program commitments are being upheld adequately. That is why we stress caution on this issue and wish to have assurances of adequate and continuing funding before proceeding."

I turn to the next issue. The capital grant plan of the Ministry of Education outlines procedures and the approval process school boards must follow to build new facilities or alter and renovate existing facilities. It also dictates the pupil loading that must be used to determine the rated capacities of schools.

Since the capital grant plan was introduced in 1979 there have been no changes to the pupil-loading factors. Today's educational programs and services have changed. The expectations of the ministry's own curriculum guidelines and policies, such as a 20-to-1 ratio for grades 1 and 2, special education programs and so on, have not been taken into account.

We therefore recommend that the capital grant plan be updated and that the pupil-loading factors be reduced to reflect the educational practice throughout the province.

On 12 January 1989, the Ministry of Education issued memorandum B2 to all school boards.

It stated there would be a retroactive amendment to the 1989 grant regulations adjusting the amount of grant paid to school boards if the actual 1989 enrolment was higher than the projected 1989 enrolment.

When the estimates are completed by school boards early in the year, it is impossible to forecast with 100 per cent accuracy the final enrolment at year end. There are a number of factors beyond the control of school boards that can affect enrolment in the schools, such as immigration, migration, the overall economy of the province and so on. The province itself has little control over these areas and finds it impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy the impact on social programs.

School boards, according to the Education Act, are not permitted to budget for a deficit. However, this retroactive adjustment to the grant regulations by the ministry could result in school boards being in a deficit position at the year end.

Like the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, we recommend that memorandum B2 be withdrawn and that only those boards that have made a major underprojection of their enrolment receive an adjustment in their grant entitlement in the following fiscal year.

I would like now to turn to the final group of issues, those tied to recent changes in federal and provincial programs which have an impact on school boards. These are the Ontario employer health levy, changes in the unemployment insurance program and the controversial goods and services tax.

In the 1989 Ontario budget, the Treasurer announced that beginning in January 1990 Ontario health insurance plan premiums would be eliminated and replaced with the employer health levy based on gross wages, salaries and other remuneration paid by the employer.

While this change in direction on OHIP premiums eliminates the necessity of collecting those premiums from employees, it will create an additional cost for school boards. Currently, this board remits approximately \$360,000 annually to the Ministry of Health, 80 per cent of which is paid by the board and 20 per cent by the employee. Under the new employer health levy, the board will have to pay 1.95 per cent of its annual payroll to the Ministry of Health, or approximately \$750,000. This represents an increase of approximately \$470,000 a year.

We therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education increase the per-pupil grant ceilings to offset the increased cost of the new employer health levy.

On 11 April 1989, Barbara McDougall, Minister of Employment and Immigration, announced a new labour force strategy that would see all unemployment insurance expenditures financed solely by the premiums paid by employer and employees, effective 1 January 1990. This change was included in the 1989 federal budget.

Not only is the provincial government forcing the school board to incur a greater share of the education costs at the local level, but also the federal government is transferring part of its deficit to the local taxpayer. This change in policy by the federal government will increase the board's share of UI premiums by \$110,000 in 1990. Again, we can only ask that the Ministry of Education increase the per pupil grant ceilings to offset the increased cost of these UI premiums.

What can one say about the goods and services tax? This proposed new tax would apply to a wider range of goods and services, such as the purchase of services for maintenance of equipment and property, the leasing of equipment, most travel expenses, communications, postage, legal fees, utility charges and so on.

While it is recognized that all levels of government are having difficulty finding new sources of revenue to meet their needs, it seems the major source of this revenue will continue to be the local taxpayer, be it through general taxes imposed by the federal and provincial governments or the property taxes imposed by municipalities and school boards. The taxpayer has no means of passing these increased taxes on to someone else, such as a business does. They either negotiate a significant increase in salary or reduce their living standards.

In examining only three aspects of this goods and services tax, the lease of school buses, legal services and utility charges, it was found that the additional cost to the board for the tax on these three items will be approximately \$200,000.

While it is mentioned in the technical paper that was tabled by Mr Wilson that school boards will be entitled to a rebate of a certain percentage of the goods and services tax, no percentages are stated.

All of these additional charges that the school board must pay in the form of the goods and services tax will mean that there will be less moneys available to provide educational programs to prepare our students for the future. We therefore recommend that the government of Ontario support school boards in their endeavours to be exempt from the impact of the new goods and services tax in 1991, or, if that

initiative is not successful, that the Ministry of Education increase the per pupil grant ceilings in 1991 to recognize the additional costs that school boards will incur as a result of this new tax.

These three issues represent an increase in cost the board will have to absorb at the local level unless the Ministry of Education increases the per pupil grant ceilings to help offset these costs. The financial impact of these three items, totalling in excess of \$780,000, will increase the board's budget by approximately 1.2 per cent. If fully funded by the local taxpayer this would translate into an increase of 3.5 mills.

These are the issues of greatest concern to our board on the topic of education financing in Ontario. I believe they reflect our board's desire, as in all school boards throughout the province, to provide quality education programs, a suitable learning environment and future citizens prepared for the challenges of tomorrow's world.

We cannot expect the full cost of education to be borne by the local taxpayer, and we look to your committee to assist the government in ensuring an equitable distribution of funds to the public and separate school boards. My colleagues and resource staff will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have regarding our presentation.

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation, Mr Darwin. We have a number of members who have indicated an interest in questioning your delegation: Mr Johnston, Mr Jackson and Mrs O'Neill. We have somewhat over 10 minutes for questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: First, just to comment, it is a very useful document for us, very practical. Given the reality of this kind of committee in coming up with a consensus on matters as controversial as are inherent in education, you have hit upon a few areas where in point of fact we can probably come up with some practical solutions to some of the problems that have been raised.

The idea of the forms changes in terms of allowing people to more quickly identify themselves and where they are going, those sorts of things, are very useful; the changes in the pupil loading formula. I think all those kinds of things are very practical, very helpful to us as a committee.

Can you tell me what the impact of the teacher shortage problem has been on you this year? Has there been an increase in your letters of permission, etc., or you have been able to hire about the same percentage of certified teachers that you have been able to in the past? Has it hit

certain areas like French? If you can just give us an idea of that, I know that would be useful.

Mr Darwin: I will ask Mr Moore.

Mr Moore: Very briefly, I guess in one sense we have been fortunate: I do not think we have seen this year a trend any different from the last one or two years, a trend which saw us in a number of cases requesting letters of permission or letters of approval. Possibly we are benefiting from the exit of teachers from other areas, I am not quite sure, but it has not been dramatic as we had, I might say, anticipated back in January or February.

1500

Mr Darwin: Perhaps we have also used some fairly innovative techniques lately in terms of attracting, having open houses and so on and advertising widely. That has helped us as well to attract numbers of candidates and certainly improved our chances of hiring what we are looking for.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the impact on the downsizing of grades 1 and 2 in terms of the ratios? What impact has there been on grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8? We have just heard from a previous board that in point of fact some of their class sizes in the intermediate section are now higher than they would like them to be, because of the way they had to shift themselves to try to get hold of some of those dollars for grades 1 and 2.

Mr Moore: Again, the effect has been somewhat in the direction you are suggesting. There is a tendency to push into the junior grades, intermediate division, enrolments slightly higher than we would like to see. Whether that is a direct consequence or simply a consequence of the grades 1 and 2 issue, it is very difficult to say, but that is happening, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Because you dealt with the issues that are maybe easier for us to handle, you have not particularly helped us with those that are more difficult. Let me start with what may be the easier from your perspective at this stage, and that is how ceilings are arrived at in the first place and the lack of consultation, the lack of a strict approach to this which makes sure that all the players are getting together and talking about what are real ceilings that should be looked at. Have you any ideas you can give us in terms of moving away from the straight unilateralism we have at the moment to some kind of systematic basis of consultation and planning for ceilings development in the years to come?

Mr Bishop: We have not given it a lot of consideration at this time, but I had the good fortune to work for the ministry for several years and was involved in helping to establish the per pupil grant ceiling as it now exists.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The culprit.

Mr Bishop: One of them.

They do not represent today's standards and the economic situation today, but I think they could be adjusted more to reflect the salary negotiations that are going on today and the rates of changes to the unemployment insurance premiums that we talked about earlier. I think there should be a great deal more consultation by the ministry with the local school boards than there is in establishing these things.

Mr Darwin: I think if you look at the general trend in most of industry today, particularly where I come from in terms of being a federal public servant, one thing we are stressing more and more is that type of co-operation and dialogue and just that kind of openness, to say, "Look, we're all there for a common purpose, which is to get an education for the children." Anything that encourages that type of openness and so on puts us all on the same side rather than the adversarial approach, which has characterized some of the relationships in the past at all levels of government.

Mr R. F. Johnston: My concern, as members of the committee have heard ad nauseam, has been around the accountability questions here. It seems to me that ceilings are used as a political football, by the boards on one side saying, "They're unrealistic," and by the government saying, "But these guys are all spending over ceiling and therefore they have to take responsibility for it." The poor elector just has no idea of what is a real cost and who should be held accountable. It is one of those very difficult issues to come to grips with.

I know there are other members who want to ask questions, so I will not ask you my question about what the balance should be between local and provincial shares and financing, which I notice you did not deal with.

Mr Jackson: Unless you would like to answer that question first.

Mr Bishop: One hundred per cent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You want to pick it all up?

Mr Bishop: A 60-40 split seems a reasonable policy.

Mr Jackson: That is all we need, a third definition. We have actual, we have approved and now you want reasonable.

Mr Bishop: The government has a hard job dealing with this issue, because it is chasing an unending circle. A lot of school boards have an ability to spend a great deal more than others, and they do spend. Our coterminous board is spending more than \$7,000 a pupil secondary, while we are spending just about \$5,600. There is no way that we can in some ways compete on that basis. I think 60 per cent of realistic approved expenditures would be—I think the ceilings have to be adjusted to reflect today's—

Mr Jackson: I can tell you spent some time with the ministry.

Interjections.

Mr Jackson: I wish to commend you for an excellent brief. It is very well laid out, you have focused on some key points, you have not pulled any punches, and that will be helpful to the committee.

I would like to talk a bit about capital, since it is probably a more current area we have been dealing with and basically the rules are on the table, as opposed to some of the assessment matters where those rules are not on the table. I would like to get a sense of how your board is dealing with the post-Bill 30 capital needs, and the size, if any, of any capital reserve funds for renovation, retrofit, etc; and if you could enlighten me with respect to how you are dealing with debenturing some of your costs, what percentage of your budget might be involved in debt service for those purposes. If you could just expand on capital briefly, I would appreciate it.

Mr Darwin: I think part of our problem in answering that particular question is probably, as you are well aware, the situation on Bill 109. The fact of that issue not being resolved yet gives us no opportunity to really know where we stand. We could be facing anything from \$6 million to \$25 million that we may or may not have; depending on the situation and the outcome there, it will give us a much better feel for exactly what we are going to be able to do and where we are going to have to go into debt and so on.

I think you will also appreciate that there is still an outstanding court action with respect to the settlement of Bill 30 on the high school questions. Of course, we have to get Bill 109 out of the way so that we know exactly where we stand from a financial point of view so we know how we are going to deal with the situation of Bill 30.

It is a very difficult question to ask, because we are not like other boards where we have a known situation in front of us. Of course, it is one that we have been, at my committee at manage-

ment, dealing with in terms of facilities, and we have undertaken feasibility studies. We do not have any of our properties that will meet our high school needs so we are looking at building perhaps three new schools. With the cost high schools come at today, if we could find the land, it is really going to create a major problem.

It is very difficult to answer the question in terms of what the future will be, because we really do not know where we are today. However, I think we could probably answer a couple of them. You asked for specific ratios and so on right now. I think we probably have that information. You wanted to know what our debt load was?

Mr Jackson: It was what percentage of your budget might be devoted to debt service in capital matters.

Mr Bishop: About two per cent. Our debt load at this point is slightly under \$3 million, because we have not built any schools in years. We have approval from the ministry to build a new one starting in 1990, and we are hoping to finance that from a local levy without debenturing it.

Mr Jackson: Perhaps I could get you to react. I had the benefit of doing the hearings on Bill 20, An Act to provide for the Payment of Development Charges. I was interested in your taking the strong position you did, but we are under some pressure to consider using the lot levy for francophone boards. Did you want to react to that concept, if in fact the francophone boards, or maybe just one of the three boards, is interested in the lot levy proposal? It is a wrinkle that was not addressed in your brief. I wondered if you have considered that.

Mr Bishop: On the lot levy side, the position of the board is that we would not be introducing one, because we did not have a growth area, along with the Ottawa Board of Education; we understand its position is exactly the same. However, with the introduction of the French-language school board, that does throw another wrinkle into it: the fact that that board covers the whole region, including Carleton, and that it may decide to introduce a lot levy out in Carleton. But it still would not have any impact on our jurisdiction.

1510

Mr Jackson: Finally, one last question. As my mind was just wandering, I was thinking a bit about the grant in lieu of taxes and your position on provincial versus regional pooling and the fact that there are an awful lot of buildings in this city and region that are federal buildings that may or

may not generate the kind of commercial assessment to benefit the boards that a city of equal size, such as Hamilton or London, might generate. Have you any thoughts on that, especially in light of some offing of some federal expenditures to school boards, as noted in your brief?

Mr Bishop: On the issue of payment or grant in lieu of taxes, the introduction by the government of the pooling of commercial-industrial assessment addresses one side of that, with the Bell telephone assessment. It is also our understanding that the ministry is examining the overall distribution of the grant in lieu of taxes and that there should be some sort of paper coming on that within the next while. We have not addressed it, but I think there is some \$90-million worth of taxes being paid to the city of Ottawa, based on the total mill rate. Approximately 50 per cent of it should be going to school boards.

Mr Jackson: You are not getting that.

Mr Bishop: We are not getting that.

Mr Jackson: That was my understanding, and I thought your brief might have touched on that when you were dealing with matters of the federal government and its imposition of legislation which would impact your budget. However, I will leave it at that. Thank you very much for an excellent brief.

The Chairman: Mrs O'Neill has one final question for you before you leave. Even though we are technically out of time, as sometimes happens, we want all the members to have an opportunity to question, so please proceed.

Mrs O'Neill: I want to begin by congratulating the chairman of the board and the director of education for hiring a very good manager of business and finance, or whatever your title is. I have had the great honour of working with Mr Bishop in another capacity, and I think you have hired one of the best in the province.

I am very happy with the brief. I too find it extremely practical, and I can guess where some of that came from. I do feel that there are a couple of things I want to thank you for highlighting, particularly page 4, the necessity to deal with the data involved with the collection of facts regarding residential and/or commercial and industrial assessment. That was brought to us yesterday in Kingston by another separate school board; you know the chairman of that board, Mr Duffey.

I think more boards should be becoming more cognizant of the importance of that, and I know

you are one of the leaders in that. I hope and intend to speak to our new Minister of Revenue (Mr Mancini) about the necessity to get on to that item very quickly, and I am glad people like yourselves have highlighted that for us.

I also think you have brought the capital grant plan—this has always been one of my contentions, that things have changed mightily since 1979, and I honestly do believe that some of the proliferation of portables in this province has something to do with this. It is not strictly growth; it is some of the programming we have introduced at the local and/or the provincial level. I am very happy that you were able to highlight that for us.

The whole brief has in it something that I think is most important for us as legislators to deal with, and that is the effects of implementation of that which we suggest and/or mandate. For that, I think, as the other two questioners have suggested, it will be very helpful to us and no doubt will be a useful piece of information. I congratulate all of you on the preparation and on your choice of personnel.

Mr Jackson: I wonder if I might ask which member of this committee's sage words they were quoting from Hansard?

The Chairman: I am afraid there is no time for paid political announcements.

Mr Jackson: I thought it was one of my better speeches.

Mr Mahoney: Do you want a second opinion?

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation to us today.

The next delegation will be the Ottawa unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Could you come forward, please?

Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your views on the financing of education in Ontario. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time, so if you would just begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, then you can begin your brief whenever you are ready after that.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Charland: I am Rhena Charland. I am president of the Ottawa unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. This is Carol Ann Tobin, who is our recording secretary of the Ottawa unit.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the Ottawa unit, represents approximate-

ly 600 men and women who are teaching kindergarten to grade 12, Ontario academic course, in the publicly supported elementary schools of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board. We welcome the invitation of the committee to address the financing of education in Ontario. We appreciate that the process of dialogue providing the people of Ontario an opportunity to express concern is commendable. It is our intention to present the concerns of financing relating to adequacy and equity as perceived by the Catholic teachers in Ottawa. In addressing adequacy, we intend to identify the areas of program needs, student needs and facility needs. Throughout this presentation we are not pretending to be accountants or to have an accounting department or research department, but basing them on the views of the teacher from the classroom.

Many new programs, each with additional costs, have been introduced by the Ministry of Education during a time period that has seen a decline in the provincial support figure for education. These new programs do not replace existing programs; they are add-ons. Providing expanded French-as-a-second-language programs, AIDS education, full-day kindergartens, drug education, integration of special education students and providing new texts free of sexual and racial stereotyping is desirable and is supported by OECTA, but we recognize that increased funding must be available.

Even Ministry of Education directives on the delivery of programs incur added costs to boards. Child-centred learning, with its emphasis on small group and individual learning, with opportunities for greater emphasis on the arts, requires a variety of site design, furniture and new resource materials. Integration of developmentally handicapped students recognizes renovations to existing structures. When moneys for these requirements are not available to boards, it is teachers who bear the brunt of trying to accommodate the ministry directives in an inadequate environment. New programs and new teaching strategies demand the in-servicing of teachers. There must be a systematic, ongoing process to effect change. Single-day professional activity sessions with perhaps 600 participants is not an adequate mechanism for the in-servicing required to keep abreast of ministry changes in education. Moneys are required for resource personnel and release time for staff as an accompaniment to directives for program change.

Startup moneys for incentive programs are recognized and appreciated as encouraging creative responses to specific needs of students and teachers in coping with change in education. However, we have serious concerns as a group of teachers, about what happens when the project money is gone. Expectations have been raised, positions have been created, services have been put into place and without a continuing source of funds, programs are technically unable to continue. However, teachers are again in the frustrating and stressful position of attempting to continue to meet the expectations of programs and projects without the support staff and resources required.

Concerning student needs, we welcome the government of Ontario's undertaking to provide equality of educational opportunity for every child in the province regardless of which of the publicly supported school systems is chosen. The Ottawa unit of OECTA recognizes that local school boards are best able to articulate and meet local needs and community interests in education. We support the principle of partnerships in education, and that coterminous boards are the most appropriate levels for comparison purposes.

We would like to share with you our concerns with respect to the educational needs of the students served by the Ottawa Roman Catholic education community. As teachers in the national capital, we are faced with a clientele who demonstrate circumstances which range from the socially and economically very advantaged community to a socially and economically disadvantaged inner city community. This broad scope generates a corresponding broad range of needs perhaps not felt in a more homogeneous community. The adequacy of funding is of primary importance. Increased demands for such services as English as a second language and enrichment are realities in our community.

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There are very specific cost implications related to ensuring that the school board has sufficient and appropriate personnel to maintain and support both the ongoing programs and the new ones as they come on board. For example, teachers are needed across the spectrum, junior kindergarten to OAC, not only to provide the class size initiatives required by the province and demanded by the needs and expectations of our students, but also to maximize opportunities for the child-centred learning dynamic that drives our delivery of program under the directives of the ministry related to primary and junior education. It is the view of the Ontario English

Catholic Teachers' Association that students should not be required to surrender the environments in which they learn best because of an inadequate or inequitable funding system.

As Catholic teachers we seize the opportunity under the amendments to the Education Act to educate all Catholic children, regardless of exceptionality. But we realize that adequate funding must be in place for the professional training of teachers who will accommodate the exceptional students and for the provision of teacher assistants. As well, it cannot be a reasonable expectation that without consideration of class size or the nature of the exceptionality teachers will be expected to implement integration.

Concerning facility needs, in our elementary and secondary schools our Catholic teachers are attempting to respond to the needs of students in inadequate facilities. Schools that were built in the past cannot adequately accommodate hard-of-hearing students and those with visual or physical handicaps. English-as-a-second-language classes and nutritious breakfast programs require specific settings. Classroom environments and furnishings for child-centred learning reflect a change from earlier program delivery requirements. Adequate ministry funding for the modernization of our schools is essential and needed immediately.

Ottawa Catholic secondary school students are graduating from four or five years of high school education without ever having attended an acceptable secondary school facility. This is a fact which we as Catholic teachers in Ottawa have addressed in the past on numerous occasions in briefs to the Planning and Implementation Commission; the standing committee on social development, on Bill 30; the Roy commission, and to your committee on 20 September 1988.

It is to be noted that our secondary school enrolment keeps increasing each year, indicating to the Catholic teachers of Ottawa that in spite of the inadequacy of our facilities, the Catholic community is strongly endorsing its support for and confidence in Catholic education.

We are optimistic that your committee will recommend an address to the injustice of the facilities, allowing us to deliver the options necessary for the provision of equality of opportunities to students in our Catholic secondary schools.

Addressing equity: We compliment the government of Ontario for its major step towards equity through its commitment to some sharing

of commercial and industrial assessment between coterminous boards.

However, we must express that equity is not attained until separate school boards have equitable access to all commercial and industrial assessment. The expectation of boards by the ministry is consistent. Hence it seems difficult to find reason for a formula of sharing that provides one board with a funding advantage.

We would further suggest that to provide data for equitable sharing of assessment all taxpayers be required to designate their taxes to one of the publicly supported school boards in a more efficient manner than is current. The slippage or leakage would be shared equitably, as opposed to being assigned to one board.

The processes of assessment must, of course, be adequately communicated to ratepayers through a thorough and sufficiently timed network of advertising aimed at informed and responsible decision-making. I can address that very specifically. It took me three days to find out a specific answer to a question through phone calls to a number of ministries to get one piece of information that I needed as support material for this, and I think I knew quite a few sources to tap. So I would say that the average taxpayer would have some difficulty understanding the assessment process.

A final comment on equity relating to the financing of education concerns the application of lot levies to provide for those capital expenditures that we outlined previously in our brief. In our Catholic schools, a solution for the attainment of funds dependent on lot levies would seem unrealistic to us in a city setting with virtually no opportunity for lot sale.

To address the inadequacies of funding as perceived by the Catholic teachers of Ottawa, we request that you bring forward to the government the following suggestions: a return to a 60 per cent provincial share of funding of education; a provision of budget, including teacher in-service to accompany ministry program directives; designation of taxes by all taxpayers; equitable access by separate school boards to all commercial and industrial assessment, and education of taxpayers as to the designation process of assessment.

OECTA Ottawa thanks the committee for the opportunity to address it and for its attention. We hope that our views from the perspective of the classroom will impact upon your decisions and recommendations in providing an ever-improved quality of education for Ontario students.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We have a couple of questioners. Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is nice to see Rhena again before the committee. As usual, this is one of the few units, this time, actually, that is presenting. The general federations are presenting, but on this issue, which one might consider to be pretty basic to teachers, we are not really getting as many locals coming forward as we might have liked.

I have a couple of things that I really have not addressed with other groups, one of which falls under this new programs problem that you identify in terms of who pays in the end, even if 100 per cent is picked up initially. It goes back to the select committee's first report and our recommendations around destreaming, which your own federation supported, although I remember you had some misgivings, as I recall, from the local units' perspective.

One of the concerns we had as a committee was that appropriate recognition of retraining of teachers to deal with heterogeneous classes and that sort of thing be involved, as well as some monetary recognition of the changes that would be involved; smaller class size, etc. We have not as yet seen that and in terms of announcements about any of the pilot projects that have been announced in this area. As yet, nobody has actually mentioned destreaming as one of the areas of extra cost; not one of the boards has yet mentioned that. I wonder if you have any comments about concerns, or whatever it might be, about where the destreaming to the end of grade 9 might be going.

Mrs Charland: I would like to comment that the misgivings that we had were the ones you later identified: Where would our teachers be if this were implemented tomorrow and we did not have the in-servicing in place? It would certainly be that we would still support our provincial stand that destreaming, for all the reasons important to the student, is a good thing but must have the resources and must have the in-servicing. Hence, I think we are trying to get at it in a general way covering all of that in this by saying that if you introduce a new program, you must accompany it with the appropriate amounts of money. It just cannot be done in a professional activity day at the Skyline; it has to have an ongoing process where people will come a number of times and be familiarized with what is really at stake.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One of the concerns I also had on this one—unlike some of the other questions where the community was consulted

fairly heavily before an initiative was taken—in this one, besides the select committee's work, there was no real presumption that the government was moving in this direction at all, and therefore the normal kinds of discussions you would expect between the federations and/or boards and the ministry around the kind of cost implications of moving into a destreaming that is not programmed to fail did not take place.

I just make that as a comment. I do not know whether you agree or disagree with it. But since the government now seems to have taken on to that idea from the committee in such a strong way, in such strong language, I am surprised that that normal consultative process seems to have been bypassed.

Mrs Charland: I am hoping it is not bypassed; I am hoping it is going to take place. I think that the Ontario Catholic teachers took a strong stand and a leadership stand in introducing that idea in the first place. We were delighted that it was supported and we would anticipate that there will be dialogue. We will sit down and talk as boards, teachers and government as to what is involved in an appropriate in-service and appropriate adjustment of class size, resources and whatever else is involved.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Let me ask you a tough question, which I should have asked the board just prior to you. It is unfair to throw it on to you, but you raised the issue, so I will come back to it, and that is on the presumption of somebody's assessment moving to the public board unless designated otherwise. We will take as a given that we should make the form faster for people to get a hold of and keep that more updated. One of the arguments for making the presumption that the money would initially go the public board until otherwise designated, is that the public board has no strings attached at all in terms of access whereas the separate system still has major discriminatory control, if you will, over the elementary panel and one could argue even at the secondary panel to a lesser degree. That is the reason that presumption of the money going to the public system is in place until the designation takes place.

I am not sure if you are arguing that. It was not in your written report, but there was a sentence you used afterwards which sort of indicated that you felt that this should just automatically be divided between the two systems. That is one of the philosophical presumptions, I think, at the moment.

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Mrs Charland: I think what I was trying to get at is that, with an improved system which was known and varied from the current system of having enumeration during election years which leaves a fair space in between that with an improved system, there would be a way for people to designate much more quickly; then of those who did not—slippage, leakage or whatever—that based on the current sharing they would be able to be shared more effectively and more quickly and not have such a long wait in between.

Mrs O'Neill: It is very nice to see you both again. I hope that you will bring some of these ideas forward to the new council that has just been announced; and I am sure you have already picked out your favourites.

Mrs Charland: I did last Saturday.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. Good stuff. I would like to ask you to tell me if you have any ideas about the last of your concluding remarks in the education of taxpayers. I consider the kind of public relations your board does through local media outstanding, and I am just wondering if you have an idea of how we could help and/or your board could help you in that fifth of your concluding comments because I really do think this is going to be quite significant. I think an educated support group or an educated electorate is very important, and that is what you are talking about.

Mr Charland: I think there are two ways that I am thinking of right now. A system of paid television advertisements, as we do if we want to raise the consciousness of the public on any particular issue, would be one way. I think it might also be introduced in a far more effective way at the teacher education institutions, just making those people who work in education very aware of what is involved in the whole assessment process and how education is funded in the province. I do not think that is as well done at the teacher training institutions as we would like. That is one group that would be very well informed.

I am sure that it could be done more effectively through municipalities with developers who are coming into areas, who would have obligations to make aware to those people who are buying exactly what is involved. I think in most cases, it is the shock of a lifetime when parents come up against it, when they suddenly go to move from one area to the other and it is the first confrontation they have had with their assessment having some real meaning. I am sure both of the publicly supported boards share that, that

they have to do a whole education system as they try to explain to the parents what is involved.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much for those ideas because we are in the implementation stage of that whole new process of designation of taxes. I hope you will communicate with our new Minister of Revenue as well.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. I have no other questioners, but thank you for your very excellent brief. We appreciate your taking the time to come before the committee today.

Mrs Charland: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman: Our next group is the Ottawa Board of Education, and Harold has copies of that presentation to be distributed. Welcome to the committee. Could you please, for the purposes of electronic Hansard, introduce yourself and all of you who are here. We have set aside half an hour for your presentation, which includes time for questions. If you could leave some time for members, we would appreciate it. Begin whenever you are ready.

OTTAWA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs Yach: My name is Kathy Yach and I am chairman of the Ottawa Board of Education. To my right is Mr Gillett, the director of the Ottawa board and to my left is Mr Bird, the superintendent of finance. We certainly appreciate the opportunity to do a presentation to you today, and I hope that you will have questions after we have done the presentation.

The Ottawa board firmly supports the concept that the public education system in Ontario is a cornerstone and, as such, must continue to be funded in a manner which reflects its commitment. The province, we recognize, must play a role in providing this direction, but it is a partnership. It is our belief that the funding of education in Ontario should match the delivery of program and that program should vary from board to board to meet the needs of the students they serve.

In each of our recommendations, I would like to give you our own rationale.

The community is seeking direction from the province and local schools for educational plans for the future. We are all being asked to be accountable. We are an inner-city board and, as such, must serve. We need to supply services to needy children, ie, social workers, mental health workers. We must work together as partners. When the province decides on a direction, we should be allowed to have input on a consultative basis.

We therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education continue to be the central force for educational directions for this province and that the direction be developed in a consultative mode with the affected school boards.

In the past, the province has directed us with Bill 82, OSIS, etc. Costs have increased. Bill 30, Bill 82, Bill 109 and declining enrolment have all affected the Ottawa Board of Education. More recent, the pooling of industrial and commercial assessment will have an increase on the mill rate to local ratepayers. Equitable funding has also affected us. Presently, you fund us at a level of three per cent. Next year, we will be allocating funds back to the ministry.

We therefore recommend that, in future, when announcing new directions, full background information be provided to school boards, including supporting evidence and target objectives.

We have ageing facilities. We need to upgrade presently 17 sites. We also did not receive capital funding this year for Conroy public school. We therefore recommend that the Ottawa board be provided with appropriate capital funding in recognition of the urgent need for upgrading of ageing facilities within this inner-city board.

We feel strongly that there has been a lack of funding in continuing education services. We spend \$7.5 million a year on continuing education. We receive \$3.9 million from the province, and the rest comes from the local taxpayer. We look forward to the discussion paper on continuing education and transportation grants by the province. We believe that students should have the right to return to school which you, the province, have not yet recognized.

We therefore recommend that the ministry fund school boards which provide programs that respond to the individual needs of students in a way that increases retention ratios and, furthermore, that funding be extended to programs which allow students to return to school in a humane and welcoming environment.

Adults should have the same rights as regular day students. They should have access to special education, guidance, counselling and other benefits that day students have. We therefore recommend that the province provide full funding to boards that provide the programs appropriate to the needs of the adult learners.

The Ottawa board will be required to finance OHIP at an amount of \$1.7 million per annum. This will increase the mill rate by over one per cent per annum. Quebec residents will have their medical insurance paid for twice: once through

individual tax returns and once through employers' payroll.

We therefore recommend that the government revise the legislation with regard to payroll tax in such a way that the school boards should not be forced to pay a premium for those employees when the same premium has been collected through the provincial tax structure.

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We all know from recent research and old research that early intervention programs decrease the costs later for disadvantaged students. The Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education must co-ordinate in a more efficient manner. We therefore recommend that the province provide funding mechanisms that recognize current research in headstart and early intervention programs.

The province needs to implement long-range planning. We would also like to see the province develop province-wide program costing mechanisms. As trustees, we would be better able to explain costs to local taxpayers. We therefore recommend that a program costing model be funded and implemented by the province so that a common standard can be established.

To assist in developing a program costing model, the elementary and secondary panels could be combined into one statement of expenditure. Formal costing models should replace additional accounting standards. The fiscal year should be the same as the school year.

We therefore recommend that every effort be made by the province to streamline budgeting and fiscal procedures to reflect the school-year reality and allow trustees sufficient planning time to make sound educational as well as fiscal decreases.

Urban boards should receive more provincial funds. We hope that Ontario does not become like the United States where only the poor and disadvantaged go to the public system.

We therefore recommend that differential funding be provided to those boards where the demand for services is the greatest and the public school boards, which must continue to provide open access to all students, be provided funds appropriate to that reality.

We support the Bartlett report as long as we do not lose our general legislative grant. We all must be fully aware that the city of Ottawa has the most to lose of any city in the province of Ontario.

We therefore recommend that the province of Ontario revise the rules with regard to grants in lieu of taxes, which will allow a more equitable sharing of these grants between school boards

and municipalities without grant reductions being imposed by the Ministry of Education.

We believe that the local taxpayers should not be burdened with directions from the throne speech. The OBE has costed, on a preliminary basis, the throne speech proposals and can identify at this stage over \$20 million in additional costs.

We therefore recommend that for all major changes in educational direction or in restructuring of educational financing for the province, the Ministry of Education provide a full rationale to school boards at the time of the announcement, as well as sufficient lead time to allow the boards adequate time to prepare for adjustments.

The Macdonald commission recommended costing by programs, for example, in special education. However, the 1989 grants have rolled these special education grants into the grant ceilings, so that it will be difficult to isolate the funding from the province in future years. The OBE ratepayers are currently paying over \$9 million a year for special ed.

We recommend that special ed funding mechanisms be revised by the province such that boards be funded for special ed services provided on the basis of program delivery and not on the basis of a per pupil grant regardless of the service provided.

The Macdonald commission recommended large increases in grant ceilings. Although we realize this will be dealt with in the commercial and industrial pooling assessment legislation, we recommend that the general legislative grant ceilings be revised to reflect current costs and realities and that once realistic ceilings are established, they be adjusted annually on the basis of cost increases in the province.

Physical plants must be kept up to date. We must provide vocational and technical programs within our school board. We therefore recommend that particular attention be paid to the provision of funds for the upgrading of vocational and technical facilities and that appropriate capital allowances be made each year specific to the needs.

It is a fact that the public education system must provide for all learners regardless of their culture, their social and economic status, their age, exceptionality or religious preference. We therefore must receive adequate funding from the province to provide these.

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. We have three people who would like to ask questions: Mr Johnston, followed by Mr Keyes and Mrs O'Neill.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Another very helpful document for us. I appreciate it very much.

There are a number of things that jumped out at me which I want to hear from you about. I am very pleased about your concentration on adult learners and the extra costs that boards like yourselves have had to assume. It is also really useful to get the \$9-million figure for your special-ed costs. That is something we are trying to get on a province-wide basis, to see which boards are actually paying out money locally for special ed in spite of the per capita assistance that is provided at this point. That is interesting.

I would be interested to know what your analysis is of why you are \$9 million over and what the per capita grants for special ed have actually provided. I would be very interested to hear a bit more about that.

Mr Gillett: Basically, it is the level of service delivery that is provided. I think if you were to compare board to board, very close to the first level of service, if not the first, would be provided by the Ottawa board. That is why the numbers of dollars gets spread so extensively into the \$9-million factor. The transportation alone is just enormous when you are transporting special ed students to particular programs in segregated settings.

Mr Bird: If I could add to that, as Mr Gillett said, the Ottawa area is a net, if you like, for eastern Ontario. We have one large, very expensive program for autistic children. In fact, more children in that program are what we would call nonresident students than resident students. Even in the schools for the trainable retarded, a similar situation exists, where we actually educate more children from outside Ottawa than from within Ottawa. We do not deny the fact that we get weighting factors for tuition fees for those, but the program is that expensive.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We heard already when we were in Kingston that you are one of the four areas in the province with a lot more special-needs children from the disabled side of things. What I was noticing when I was going through the province's statistics on this is that there is a huge discrepancy among boards in terms of the percentage of students who are identified as bright kids. Some boards almost have no bright kids, I noticed—I will not identify them—and others have a very large number of kids who are deemed to be exceptional in those terms. Where does Ottawa fit into that? I did not get that far along in the tables.

Mr Gillett: I do not know what percentage Ottawa has as compared to other boards, but I

think one of the situations that occurs is that the more sophisticated your identification mechanisms become, the more they get identified. It is a win-and-lose proposition, because you can find the people as it becomes sophisticated. Look at the number of identification and placement review committees we hold and the number who are identified that way. They get found, they do not fall through the cracks and then you have the delivery problem and the cost problem associated with it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am very much inclined towards the programmatic funding approach on this. It is interesting that in fact we had similar kinds of presentations put forward to us by a number of advocacy groups for disabled kids, not on specifically programmatic, but at least separated-out budgets.

The argument which is often used against that is the old universality argument; that is, if you place this in the general grants apportionment, then you are going to be guaranteed that it is going to do well, whereas if you put it as a specialized group, then when push comes to shove, those groups do not have the political power as does the general population. Therefore, you are more likely to lose by that in the long run in terms of the dollars that are actually put in.

Potentially, a board could be left in the difficult position of having to face its own angry local electorate around that matter, as a minority group. That is the argument that is being used to say that it should be mainlined rather than segregated on a programmatic basis, if I can use the language of special ed.

Mr Gillett: There is another argument, though, that there may be enough money going into special ed in this province through the overlay that it may not necessarily be going into special ed in the board to which it is allocated. I think that from the point of view of accountability and an assurance in the province that the funds are going where allocated, the programming allocation would assure that that could be done.

Mr Keyes: I just wanted to follow up on special ed because all the groups appearing before us at the moment that represent special ed, to go back, want to be sure that they have the grants separated out on a per pupil basis. I wondered if you have had discussions with your own special ed people.

Also, do you have a special education advisory committee that operates in Ottawa and what type of input may it have made or not have made to you on this issue? I think every group we met from Toronto and Kingston said the same thing.

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Mrs Yach: We have a very large SEAC and it is very active. They have had a lot of input in the past number of years, and I think the fact the autistic unit is with the Ottawa board is a demonstration of it. As far as the input fiscally, they lobby every year during budget times for additional costs to themselves, additional programs.

Mr Bird: I could also add that the discomfort we feel with special ed being rolled into the ceilings is because, of course, we do not have a grant on recognized ordinary expenditures. We are minus 10 per cent in elementary, minus 12.8 per cent in secondary.

It is true that for the first year or so the province has identified the dollars for special education, but in fact next year which portion of the ceilings is in the negative grant? Is it special ed? Is it something else? So that is what we mean when we say that next year we have lost basically the ability to differentiate for special ed or any other program for that matter.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In social policy terms, it is an interesting dilemma in terms of how we come at that. I was pleased by your notion of how we deal with the general legislative grants in the future and I am anxious to hear more from people about what kind of consultation process should be put into place now to establish realistic rates before we move on to the indexation notion you put forward. I do not expect that now, but if your board thinks more about this, I think we would all be interested in hearing it.

The small question that was around the headstart-style programs of the early identification, I have not seen in any of the ministry stuff I have received, unless I have missed it. I have been known to miss things that did not seem to be that important to me at the instant. But what is the funding right now for early identification kinds of programs?

Mrs Yach: I think presently headstart programs are funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is no education money?

Mrs Yach: There is no education funding. Of course, the same thing applies to day care, as you know, other than capital funds for new schools. I think what we are trying to say is that you have to look at the whole issue of headstart. You may have tried to address that with the four- and five-year-old kindergarten full day, but I think you have to look at that at an earlier age. We

know that the research proves—and it is more from the United States; there is very little research in Canada to prove that—but we know that early intervention, the headstart programs in the US have certainly benefited the populace over the years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One of the problems we noticed last year, and Yvonne and I both were involved in this line of questioning, is that our own boards are often not maintaining information that would be helpful. For instance, absenteeism in kindergarten is not a statistic which is readily collectable at this stage by the province, which has also not taken the initiative to try to do that. Even though we know, as you say, from international studies, that this can lead to probabilities of dropout and failure within the system, we have not done any of that data collection or putting front-end money into dealing with that problem. So I am really glad you pointed it out.

Mrs Yach: Just one other thing: I feel very strongly that you also should put money into research. I think we have been shortsighted in education by not looking at the early years. We have tended to do research at the secondary level and not as much on the early years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the committee's first report indicated that we saw a real need there too.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Johnston. Mr Keyes and then Mrs O'Neill.

Mr Keyes: I guess with the fortunate situation you are in in your area of assessment, it almost goes without saying what your opinion is about the provincial collection of business and commercial assessments that have been proposed by some. Do you wish to make a comment about it just for the record? You do happen to be in that fortunate position where, as you said, next year you will be giving back money in essence to the province literally through your grant system which will be reduced to nil, similar then to Toronto.

Mr Bird: The Ottawa board two or three years ago came out with the position that if pooling was to be thrust upon us, have it on a local level. It is for that reason at least we are with the coterminous board as opposed to across Ontario. Of course, the problem is that we are one of the 13 losers, in quotation marks. At the present time the figures say we will lose \$4.5 million a year but that the province will ensure that no board loses funds for six years. In six years, that figure could be \$6 million.

So what is being said to us is that we must reduce for that particular factor alone by \$6 million per annum and start now, and naturally we are extremely unhappy with the pooling legislation. The fact is that grants were to look after that and they looked after that except for 13 boards—not for us. They did for the other boards. Many boards are actually making a profit on the legislation, such as the board two before us.

Mr Keyes: I think you can appreciate the position of the committee members. We listen, as representatives come to us from across the province, to the desires of the have-not boards, some who wish they had the Ottawa problems or Toronto problems and would like to see that type of sharing. It does provide you with an opportunity, though, to perhaps have some of the richest—or most extensive—is a better term to use—programs for people, and also to allow, perhaps, highly enhanced preferential pupil-teacher ratios. Do you want to just comment on PTRs in the Ottawa board?

Mrs Yach: To be honest with you, that is a very big concern within our community. I am talking now as a politician, but there is very strong lobbying within our area that we have small class sizes. I think the province has done that with grade 1 and grade 2.

There is always a debate: Is a larger class better than a smaller class and can you teach the same thing? I think we ourselves must be very much cognizant, though, and I point this out to you, that society has changed; that the student classes we had 20 years ago are not the same as today. Many kids are from single-parent families, many kids are poor, and there are a lot of things that are different. The church does not take over any more the way it did in the past. The families are not there for support.

So I think we should look at what an ideal class size is, and I do not have the answer to that.

Mr Keyes: I do not think there is an ideal class size. Would it be fair to say that your PTR for the whole Ottawa system is under 20 to 1, maybe 18 to 1?

Mr Gillett: You are correct in your assumption, but that would go back to Mr Johnston's original question. If you factor in the special education, the segregated classes, the section 25 schools, it drives your PTR down. To give you an example of where the numbers do not balance, it is in the regular program. When Mr Peterson announced the objective of getting down to the 20 to 1, we had to add 39 teachers just to stay in line with that proposal and we will have to add 20 more next year to stay in line with the next drop in

that factor. So our numbers are not small enough in the primary grades even to have been at his proposal when we went through the implementation of it. Special education drives a lot of our dollar costs and a lot of our PTR costs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: English-as-a-second-language dollars, too, I would imagine.

Mr Gillett: ESL dollars and other dollars that are very small and meet a very limited-need population, but very much a need to that group. In any PTR discussion, to look strictly at the bottom line number may not be justifiable and may not reflect the community needs that we particularly have in inner-city boards. I think you would have to put both together.

Mr Keyes: Did it have any significant adverse impact on your junior and intermediate classes? Some of the other boards have tried to suggest that that has created such, but has yours been adversely affected that way? Yours has not been driven up, from my experience. As a former teacher, I used to have the opportunity to occasionally visit Ottawa schools. We looked rather enviously sometimes at class sizes in intermediate classes as well as junior.

Mr Gillett: The answer is no. We overlaid teachers to keep the Peterson proposal in the perspective in which it was designed, and we did not pass it on to the junior and intermediate classes.

Mrs O'Neill: I doubt that you are at 10 to 1, which is what one of the people said who wrote to me complaining about your tax increases. I think I can justifiably answer that you are not at 10 to 1 by any stretch of the imagination, correct?

Mr Gillett: Correct.

Mrs O'Neill: I was going to check those figures with you, but I am pretty sure I can deal with the letter without becoming too data-specific.

I would like to ask you to talk a little more about the recommendation you reference on page 15: "streamline budgeting and fiscal procedures to reflect the school year reality." Would you say a little more about that so we would understand it better?

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Mr Bird: The Ottawa board has done a lot of research into the year-end. We have visited the Edmonton school board, we have talked with the Ontario Association of School Business Officials and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, and what is behind this recommendation is basically the fact that the ministry releases a grant

regulation so late in the year that this year it gave the Ottawa board six days to finish its budget.

What we are saying is that if the ministry is going to stay with that time line, and there is no indication to say it will not do the same thing in 1990, if the fiscal year started on 1 September, as it does in Alberta, the grant regulations could come out in April, which would give you a little longer to finalize and make the fine tuning, and boards would have two or three months to calculate their revenues available, complete their expenditure forecasts and, when their fiscal year started, complete their budget as opposed to starting their budget, which we now do. We basically do not start until January, knowing full well that the grants will be another two months anyway. This is not just limited to 1989. The release of the grant regulations has regrettably been coming later and later every year.

So that is one of the main reasons for the change to 1 September, but there are supplementary reasons; they get a bit into detail. It gets into the schools themselves, where we are really supposed to be serving. The principals, department heads and all other people connected with budgets would play a more significant role in the budget development and its implementation if it were on a school-year basis. We feel we are there to serve the teachers and the students, and not just the financial end of it. We have seen other provinces. We are one of the few provinces left that works on a calendar year, and we have seen how it has worked in other provinces, other jurisdictions, the United States, universities.

That is what we mean by better planning. The fact is that we cannot wait any more and do our—we cut about \$2 million out of the budget this year in six days, and that was a drop in the bucket. We still had a 12.5 per cent increase in mill rate. This year, it is true, we started on the 1990 budget the day after 1989 was complete, but last year we were a little naïve; we did not know we had to do that. We are actually going to complete our budget on 28 October this year, in preliminary fashion it is true, but at least it will be complete. But that is the reason for the suggested change in year end.

Mrs O'Neill: So you are suggesting there both be more participation by the key players and, second, that the facts, figures and data you are working on would be more accurate?

Mr Bird: And out to the boards much earlier, it is true.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay, I would like to also ask you if you have made application or plan to make application in reference to the upgrading of

vocational and technical facilities, because, as you know, there has been a designation in this year's budget presented by Mr Nixon on that matter. If you are going to do that, I would like to know.

Mr Bird: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Could you be more specific? Does it tie in with this recommendation and what are the thrusts of your application for a pilot?

Mr Gillett: I guess the truest answer would be that we are hoping to see some more firm discussion with regard to the technical upgrading in the throne speech, and how the theme shop model is going to work. Certainly, we have run a 60-specialty shop model and we have to move out of that, even in vocational and technical schools, and become adaptive to what you have indicated in the throne speech.

We do not know the rules and regulations with regard to applying for this as yet, so we are looking forward to receiving some information, but we want to be in conjunction with the throne speech direction when we make our application. We have done five theme shops, but the model in the throne speech is somewhat different than what we had originally foreseen, so we want to be adaptive in that way. We are kind of caught between the two information packages at this time.

Mrs O'Neill: Please keep me in touch, and if I can be of any help.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation today. The next presentation will be by Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Could you come forward, please?

Good afternoon. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation and we are hoping at least part of that will be reserved for members' questions. Begin by identifying yourself for the purposes of Hansard, and then commence whenever you are ready.

STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Eamer: Ron Eamer, chairman of the board.

Mr Métivier: Gilles Métivier, director of education.

Mr Eamer: The trustees of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Catholic school board are pleased to accept the invitation of the select committee to express the views of the board and, therefore, of the Catholic ratepayers of the three

united counties. Our board is the easternmost board in Ontario. The student population is spread over 21 elementary and three secondary French-language schools, and 19 elementary and one secondary English-language schools. Those French- and English-language schools are attended by 6,097 and 4,620 students respectively.

At trustee level, the French- and English-language sections are composed of six members of the FLS and eight members of the ELS, representing 21,194 and 28,302 electors respectively as of the last enumeration. Although we deplore the absence of a mechanism for resolution of conflicts, the board has learned to live with the imposition of the court in the ruling of 4 November 1988 that all matters of common jurisdiction must be subjected to a double majority vote. However, it is clear that at any time an impasse over financial matters that affect both sections may occur. Such an impasse has the potential of adversely affecting the welfare of the students in one or both sections of the board. The matter is indeed cause for great concern, as even the Minister of Education refused to get involved in possible resolution of conflicts. This was confirmed in a letter from the Honourable Chris Ward to the director of education dated 1 August 1989.

This brings us to recommendation 1: that the select committee immediately petition the Minister of Education to establish a resolution-of-conflict mechanism to be used by boards that must presently operate by double majority vote in matters of common jurisdiction.

As of September 1989 the en bloc transfer of some 1,500 French-language students took place from the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Board of Education to our board. The financial transfer will occur on 1 January 1990 and the level of co-operation between the boards is presently very good. We welcome the opportunity to extend our system, and the present government deserves hearty congratulations for the implementation of the extension decision of 14 June 1984.

However, it must be noted that the Catholic board has incurred significant expenses in preparation for a smooth transfer in the year preceding the actual takeover. The FLS approved a secondary superintendent budget of over \$100,000 in the school year 1988-89, and all French-language administrative staff incurred additional expenses in an effort to plan and co-ordinate a smooth transition. We are proud to state that the objective was reached totally. The committee must consider that no additional

grants or allowance were offered to us in this matter, and as no grants will be generated until the year 1990, our ratepayers will again have to totally subsidize startup costs, where public school systems receive additional funding to offset staff adjustments, etc.

As part of the en bloc transfer, the FLS of the board will not be enjoying its own facility at Ecole secondaire régionale Glengarry. Although discussions have taken place between the two boards and the matter was submitted to a planning and implementation committee in January 1988, the total property remains in the hands of the public board in spite of the fact that the majority of students in the school come from homes of Catholic school supporters and the Ministry of Education recognizes that there are two distinct schools within the confines of one building. Again, we believe that government intervention should facilitate the release of the French-language school facility to the Catholic board.

In April 1982 our board decided to extend full secondary programming in the English section. The doors of the present St Joseph's Secondary School opened in September 1983 with an enrolment of 52 students in grade 9. Our enrolment forecast rapidly became totally redundant following the good news of 14 June 1984. In fact, our present enrolment at the school is 660 students and growing, in spite of the fact that our students and staff share part of the Général-Vanier Secondary School public building, as well as occupy 22 portable classrooms. Again, attempts at acquiring a building from the public board in the city of Cornwall proved futile, and an allocation for a new building has not been made.

We agree with government that new facilities should not be built where there exists a possibility of vacancy in the near future. However, we are of the opinion that the extension endeavours of a board should not be stifled by lack of proper facilities for Catholic students who now can enjoy an education which they can rightfully claim and which was denied them over the century. The foregoing statement of facts related to secondary schooling in both the French and English languages serves as an example of lack of just financing to Catholic schools. Although a legal case could probably be made regarding the constitutionality of the level of funding to Catholic schools, we would prefer that the problem be addressed by government.

Which brings us to recommendation 2: That government appoint a referee who would equally represent the interests of public and Catholic students when finances are required to provide equal opportunity.

We move on to assessment issues. It is our hope that the legislation related to assessment will be tabled shortly containing provisions as follows:

1. School boards lack support from the federal government by not receiving a proportionate share of payments in lieu for federal buildings and properties. In the Cornwall area alone, major examples such as the Department of Transport Training Institute, the Lionel Chevrier building, the post office and the St Lawrence Seaway Authority buildings are prime examples of lack of school support, yet our guess is that the majority of the workers in those buildings have children who attend our schools.

That brings us to recommendation 3: That all payments in lieu from the federal government be shared by municipalities and boards of education.

2. The municipal taxes levied on provincially owned properties, such as the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, tourist offices, hospitals, etc, again should be shared with boards of education. In the case of rental agreements, such as for the assessment offices, the housing authority, etc, the school support should be proportionately divided between boards.

That brings us to recommendation 4: That all provincial tax payments to municipalities be shared with boards of education.

3. Although well intended, section 126 of the Education Act does not and cannot work.

That brings us to recommendation 5: That section 126 of the Education Act be revised to ensure that:

(a) Strictly private companies be excluded. Every other type of corporate or company assessment should be shared and proper definitions produced to reduce interpretation problems;

(b) The sharing include assessment from all commercial as well as residential property owned by companies within the definition;

(c) Vacant corporate property such as parking areas, lands awaiting subdivision, etc, be included;

(d) The religion as well as the school support of partners be given in cases of partnership;

(e) A simple appeal mechanism be provided.

The proposed regional pooling will remain unfair to many boards and especially to small Catholic and public boards. The government of

Ontario has recognized regional disparities for many decades. It has been able to classify regions in terms of have and have-nots. It is clear, then, that regional pooling will promote the sharing of poverty in many areas of the province and that the great beneficiaries of such a plan will be the assessment-rich basin of central Ontario.

As well, if the pooling is to be implemented over a six-year period, the immediate financial needs of the extended Catholic systems will not be met. It can readily be seen that our system, which has received some 1,500 students in an en bloc transfer, cannot provide the same level of service as those provided by a commercial-assessment-rich public board without overtaxing the residential sector.

That brings us to recommendation 6: That pooling of industrial-commercial and related residential assessment take place on a provincial level; and,

Recommendation 7: That the share of pooling be immediate for all boards and not implemented over a period of years.

Catholic ratepayers presently may direct their taxes to the public board. The reverse is not true. Also, as Catholic ratepayers move, property taxes always revert back to the public school support. The logical flaw in these practices is a flagrant example of discrimination towards Catholic boards.

We often receive requests from non-Catholic parents to transfer taxes to our system so that they will not have to pay fees on top of taxes. Unfortunately, we cannot help such parents.

That brings us to recommendation 8: That government allow freedom of choice in tax direction to all ratepayers, while guaranteeing Catholic governance of the Catholic school system.

Recommendation 9: That once a ratepayer has been identified as a public or Catholic supporter, the support continues to follow, regardless of moves. The support change would therefore have to be documented and approved by the ratepayer.

Our board has carefully studied the lot levy proposal and wishes to voice its dissatisfaction with it. Although we agree that such a scheme may be most beneficial to provincial government coffers, we see the proposal as discriminatory against young families who indeed support school systems with already heavy taxes on the homes they must provide to raise children in a proper family context and climate. The levy would hit the young families quite hard, when in fact it will not affect a great number of singles and middle-aged persons who dwell in condo-

miniums and apartments. We feel that education financing should be everyone's business, including all income earners. Also, again, we understand that such a levy may be very beneficial to large central Ontario boards, but negligibly so to a board such as ours.

That brings us to recommendation 10: That the provincial level of capital funding not suffer a decrease as a result of lot levy legislation.

Finally, Madam Chairman, we express gratitude to you and members of your committee for the opportunity to express our views. We specifically request that you convey our heartfelt thanks to the Minister of Education and the Ontario government for the major changes brought before the Legislature as they pertain to greater fairness towards the education of Catholic school children.

Our system was prompt to respond to the extension legislation, and as a result we are able to offer full programming in the official languages at both elementary and secondary levels. It is our hope that further refinements of funding mechanisms will guarantee totally just and equitable financing to all boards.

We hope the recommendations contained herein will be received by the committee as positive input towards that objective.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Eamer, for a brief done well. We will start the questioning with Mr Villeneuve.

Mr Villeneuve: Ron and Gilles, thank you very much for making an excellent presentation. I appreciate recommendation 10 very much because lot levies will certainly be a wild card in the upcoming legislation and probably can still be amended, so we appreciate the recommendation. That was expressed also by the presentation made yesterday by the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. It was basically the same.

Double majority is a very controversial issue. You have made recommendations here. Could you go into a little more depth as to how this could be handled, or do you think we should do away with it and then come in with a whole new system?

Mr Eamer: I think there is great room for improvement because right now, while the board itself is recognized as the corporate body, either panel can bring everything to a grinding halt. In our particular case, less than 25 per cent of the board could bring everything to a grinding halt. When you think of that, that is not really a good business scheme to have at the board table.

If you were to sit around the table of any organization, be it a business or community organization, you would not allow it to happen that less than 25 per cent of the total board could dictate to the majority. So there has to be another mechanism, and there are possibilities, but I think Mr Métivier might have an alternative he would like to suggest at this time.

Mr Métivier: Just as a supplementary comment to what Mr Eamer has said, I hope you realize that double majority vote on common matters means that with the agenda, which has to be approved by a double majority, the whole board can come to a standstill as of the very first item on the agenda.

We have not at this point arrived at any decision that was not achieved by double majority, although we had an impasse in June, and I referred the matter first to the legislation branch. The legislation branch will not give interpretations, saying that that is not its mandate. The Minister of Education himself, in a written answer to me, refused to get involved. When we discussed this with the lawyers both from the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association and representing l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario and government, we felt as directors of education, all six of us, that there had to be some kind of resolution-of-conflict mechanism whereby at no time could students of the system be held hostage to the system or to the double majority vote. That can easily happen at any time.

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The resolution-of-conflict mechanism can be very simple. It could be a person appointed, like a type of ombudsman appointed by the minister. At the local level, it could certainly be a local arbitration board of some kind composed of a representative from each section and a third-party, so-called arbitrator.

I can understand the reticence of government to become involved since the court case is still in process. However, I would hope that the government would do everything in its power to try to offer some kind of help to a board that will encounter such a problem where the students will be left holding the bag, and I wait any day for it to occur.

Mr Villeneuve: I know that has been very controversial back home and will probably continue as such for the period of time that the case is before the courts and litigation is proceeding. I know it is very difficult for anyone, and certainly the ombudsman or the referee type situation would be temporary at best. I do not

know of anyone who would volunteer to be that right now. Do you?

Mr Eamer: Somebody who was planning to leave the country anyway, so really it would not matter.

Mr Villeneuve: There are many other questions such as method of enumeration and what have you, but because of time constraints, I will concede to some of my colleagues here and hear what they have to say from an outsider's point of view.

The Chairman: Are there any other questions from members of the committee? Do you want to ask your question about enumeration then?

Mr Villeneuve: Could you comment further on the enumeration and the problems we ran into at enumeration time; in other words, very little lead time and the government got caught in a bit of a bind. It was trying to bring in a method of establishing which school system you were to support. We had several choices and there seemed to be a problem, particularly in the area of support for the French area. Could you comment on that and possibly provide us with some of your advice as to what maybe we should do or could do to correct this.

Mr Métivier: First, when we heard that a different method of enumeration was to be put in place we asked that as a trustees association as well as supervisory officers association, we have some input into any questionnaire that might be circulated in order to answer to the enumeration. There was no input given because input was not solicited at the time. When we first saw the document that was being circulated or that would be circulated to the ratepayers, we failed to understand how a province that recognizes there is a fairly high rate of illiteracy would expect so many ratepayers to be so fluent in the language as to answer some of the questions on that enumeration questionnaire.

Second, there is the matter of identification of French and English. There was inconsistency in the text, both French and English. There were several problems involved and I refer you back to—I will gladly supply it to the committee—our written commentary on that whole process of enumeration.

Certainly, it has produced a problem. That is where the problem of double majority came into being, because in our system where we have a majority of French-language students, we have a minority of French-language trustees representing a minority of French-language ratepayers, or ratepayers who have elected to be French-

language. It creates a controversy at board level because it creates an imbalance in representation for the number of students in the system and vice versa. We will gladly supply the information that we have given in writing to the minister pertaining to the whole matter.

Mr Villeneuve: Just a final one: Stemming from the enumeration of course is the amount of taxes that go to the different boards. You have suggested that commercial and industrial should be pooled at the provincial level. You suggest that farm and residential should stay the same and be real estate based, with some of the inequities that are still within that system, and not go to a combination of income tax, real estate tax or some other type of combination. You would be happy with farm and residential staying basically as the basis, and commercial and industrial being equitably distributed from the provincial level. Is that what I read in your brief?

Mr Eamer: I think commercial-industrial assessment pooling at the provincial level is indeed the fair way to do it when you think of all the citizens in the province basically supporting the central Ontario pool of commercial-industrial assessment. That is what we keep looking to. We hope to be able to share it on the local scene. We are working towards that now and steps are being taken to facilitate that. That is great if you are in an area where there is a lot of commercial-industrial assessment.

I think that if the promise of equal opportunity in education to all students in the province is to become a reality, then we have to share the total pool of assessment from border to border, for all the students, so that when they leave our area and proceed to their next level of education, they can be on the same footing as students from the assessment-rich areas of the province.

Mr Villeneuve: I know the timing for the release of the general legislative grant announcements is a problem because of its tardiness. It has been mentioned today that it is getting later and later. It has now gone into April, which basically is retroactive to September. In a board such as we have in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, it makes it most difficult to try and organize your budgeting.

Certainly, we realize that the mandate of this committee is to look at new, innovative methods of going after funding for education. However, the distribution, once it gets to the government level, has to be done in a somewhat more opportune time so that boards such as yours that are very dependent on funding from the provincial level can adjust their budgeting and not have

to wait until basically the money is all spent to find out where you stand.

Mr Eamer: Exactly. We do agree. We are at least 50 per cent through our school year spending, if you work it out, when the grants are made available.

When you mention method of taxation and so on in both the rural and residential areas, the other thing I think you should pay particular attention to that just recently it has really become a factor for the farming community with the taxation applying to all of their land, I understand, and the increases they are about to feel are going to be rather drastic.

Perhaps we should take a look at that rural assessment program again and somehow tie taxation for education to one's ability to pay. I think we all enjoy a good standard of living in this province. People who are not property owners, and who are making good wages and enjoying many of the benefits, should also share part of the burden for keeping this province number one in the country. I think we can contribute much to our standing in the country through education at the primary and secondary levels. Only through adequate and equitable funding can we do that.

I think you should really take a look, or the government should take a look, at tying the funding of education to the population's ability to pay in general rather than where they live or how they live.

Mr Villeneuve: That is the very reason for the existence of this committee, first and foremost. Many other things get mentioned but that is first and foremost our mandate.

Mr Métivier: If I may return to Mr Villeneuve's original question pertaining to the assessment of farm and residential, we are satisfied that it is up to us and is incumbent on our board to ensure that we have the greatest possible level of residential and farm assessment. It is our duty to attend to that. Once we have achieved that, if the proposal, as we see it now, to share industrial and commercial is going to be proportionate to that, we will be satisfied with that if we cannot get provincial pooling. But we definitely feel that it is incumbent on us to achieve that high level of residential and farm assessment.

Mr Villeneuve: And as accurately as possible.

Mr Métivier: That is correct.

The Chairman: We have about one minute left. Mrs O'Neill has a question, so she is going to talk very quickly.

Mrs O'Neill: I may or may not. It is nice to see you both again. I would like to ask you if you sent

your comments on the enumeration form to the Minister of Revenue.

Mr Métivier: We sent it to three ministers at the time—the Minister of Revenue, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

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Mrs O'Neill: You have brought a couple of different points of view than other separate school boards that have appeared to this point. I would like to ask you what you have in mind, and I am really having trouble understanding when and how this would fall into place, on the appointment of a referee.

Mr Villeneuve: Come down to some of the meetings.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wondered what you could give me as an example when this, what I would consider relatively drastic action, would be brought into play. You must have had something in mind on page 3.

Mr Métivier: Basically, yes. We feel that although we have had some discussions with all parties, no one has come up with an answer and I agree that the answer is a difficult one to arrive at. However, our concern is for the impasse that may be reached that will affect the students directly, and that can happen at any time.

Mrs O'Neill: But I felt this was when finances are required to provide equal opportunity. Is that beyond the double majority? I guess I was taking it beyond the board meeting of a double majority. Maybe I have mistaken you then.

Mr Villeneuve: Possibly once the enumeration problem has been solved, you would not need that. I think it is just an interim situation, that you are faced with some—

Mr Eamer: Just a minute. You are specifically alluding to recommendation 2 on page 3?

Mrs O'Neill: Yes; right.

Mr Eamer: Following that paragraph from above, I think we may be alluding to the possibility of someone zipping into a community and analysing the possibilities that are there to solve a situation without placing an increased burden on the local taxpayers. If there really is a way to whip into a community, look at the existing school systems, the existing physical facilities—that is, buildings and grounds and so on—and redistribute the children keeping in mind boundaries and so on, making a school facility available for extension or whatever, then this person should have the ability to do that.

We have known that representatives from government have witnessed and observed certain conditions. They have been pointed out to the Minister of Education and we have been asked specifically, "Do you think I am foolish enough to go in there and make that decision for you?" Now that is what we are alluding to.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for explaining it. May I go to page 6 for a moment. This again is something that I have not seen presented by any of the other separate boards, freedom of choice in tax direction going both ways. Do you have several supporters who are non-Catholic? Do you have several non-Catholics in your system, is my first question?

Mr Eamer: We have many non-Catholics in our system who choose the Catholic system for various reasons.

Mrs O'Neill: You would like to be able to give them the freedom of choice of being able to—

Mr Métivier: In fact, we just this week received a letter from one of the local newspaper editors who cannot understand why we should charge fees to a non-Catholic who wants to send his children to a Catholic school. We try to explain that. Of course, everybody realizes, especially an editor of a newspaper, that non-Catholics must pay fees to public boards and that Catholics have the choice of paying to either board. This is very difficult for people to understand. Why should there be that kind of discrimination?

However, we are prompt to add that we would not want that at the risk of losing the autonomy of the system; that is, the governance of the system. But there should be some kind of mechanism to allow all ratepayers to make that choice as we had to do some years ago in Europe, for instance. If you were an educator with Department of National Defence schools in Europe and you chose to collect your income tax at the end of the year, you had to automatically forego your right to vote in federal and provincial elections. That is the choice a person made. That kind of mechanism could be put in place.

Mrs O'Neill: A rhetorical question: I guess you have not cleared that with your associations, whether they be trustees or supervisory officers.

Mr Eamer: We speak as a board.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. I will leave that.

The Chairman: I would like to thank you for coming and making your presentation today and for contributing to our committee.

Mr Métivier: Thank you very much for the opportunity and I would like to thank Mr

Villeneuve of the committee for keeping us informed about the committee's reports and so on. He sends us copies of the reports as they come out. Also, I must apologize for any reference to Mr Chairman in the text, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: I noticed Mr Eamer very quickly and very alertly changed it a number of times. He was very astute in that regard.

Mr Eamer: I know when I am on thin ice.

Mr Villeneuve: You skate well around us.

The Chairman: There is much more chance of the chair cutting you off if you call her Mr Chair.

Our final presentation today will be from the Friends of Public Education in Ontario, Renfrew county chapter; John Hilborn.

Mr Hilborn: I have some overheads. Is this being recorded?

The Chairman: It is being recorded.

Mr Hilborn: Perhaps someone could help me.

The Chairman: Perhaps the clerk can assist you.

Perhaps you would be seated, Mr Hilborn. I guess I have identified you, so you do not need to identify yourself for the purposes of Hansard. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation and you may begin whenever you are ready.

FRIENDS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

Mr Hilborn: Good afternoon, Madam Chairman and members of the select committee. I am representing the Friends of Public Education in Ontario, in particular the Renfrew county and Ottawa chapters. You will be hearing next week from the chapter in Essex county when you visit Windsor.

All of us today are participating in the democratic process. So to start my presentation, I would like to quote one of my favourite persons, Winston Churchill. You have probably seen this: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others."

Our organization is a citizens' lobby founded in 1985 to defend the public school system against the inequities resulting from the extension of separate school funding in grades 11, 12 and 13. We do not represent any religious, professional or special interest group.

Our membership is province-wide, distributed among 39 public school board districts and 76 Ontario communities. We publish 10 newsletters a year and maintain active contacts with elected representatives of all levels of government. Our

mission is to preserve and strengthen public education in Ontario, recognizing that our society is now multicultural, composed of a large number of minority groups. Our purpose in submitting this brief is to put on public record the evidence that there is a lack of equity, a lack of accountability and a lack of adequate funds for primary and secondary education.

First, the lack of equity. If the ordinary meaning of equity is fairness, the public funding of Roman Catholic schools is fundamentally unfair. The amendment to the Education Act known as Bill 30 extended and encouraged the segregation of students and teachers on the basis of religion, thereby giving an exclusive privilege to Roman Catholics at public expense. From our point of view, there is no more logic or justice in school segregation based on religion than in segregation based on race or colour.

According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1981, every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Although Bill 30 obviously violates the Canadian Charter, it was justified on the grounds that section 93 of the Constitution Act of 1867 guaranteed "certain rights and privileges" to Roman Catholics in Ontario with respect to denominational schools.

In June 1987 the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed the legal validity of Bill 30 under section 93 of the Constitution Act. However, in that Supreme Court decision, Justice Wilson stated: "Before considering the merits of the appeal, I want to stress, as did the Chief Justice of Ontario in the court below, that it is not the role of the court to determine whether, as a policy matter, a publicly funded Roman Catholic school system is or is not desirable. That is for the Legislature. The sole issue before us is whether Bill 30 is consistent with the Constitution of Canada."

In the same decision, Justice Estey wrote: "It is axiomatic that if the charter has any application to Bill 30, this bill would be found discriminatory and in violation of section 2a and section 15 of the Charter of Rights."

Further to that, another section of the Supreme Court decision states, "These educational rights, granted specifically to the Protestants in Quebec and the Roman Catholics in Ontario, make it impossible to treat Canadians equally." Rather

than indicating that Bill 30 was fair, the Supreme Court went out of its way to emphasize the fundamental unfairness of giving special privileges to one religious denomination.

No one argues against the right of any religion in a free society to propagate its faith. What is wrong in a free society is that any religion should propagate its faith at public expense.

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What was deemed reasonably fair and equal in 1867, when there was a simple mix of almost exclusively Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians, is not so in the religiously diversified society of today. In today's context, the rights and privileges granted in 1867 are discriminatory. As a practical matter, many of us were willing to tolerate separate elementary schools as an unfortunate legacy from an earlier time. Then we put up with the extension of funding to grades 9 and 10, which was implemented without formal legislation.

Bill 30 was the final blow. It ended any hope that our elected politicians would replace outdated concepts of religious privilege with modern concepts of human rights, consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Lack of accountability: Who is accountable for the hundreds of millions of additional tax dollars required for the full funding of Roman Catholic secondary schools? The story starts in 1981. According to a book by journalist Claire Hoy, Tory Premier Bill Davis secretly "promised Cardinal Carter that during the life of the current government he would end the 110-year-old dispute by extending public aid to Roman Catholic separate schools beyond grade 10 to grades 11, 12 and 13." That is a quote.

Three years later, just before his retirement, he revealed the secret deal, and in the 1985 election, no political party opposed it. The Roman Catholic lobby flexed its political muscle and Bill 30 became law, spearheaded by Sean Conway, Minister of Education in the Liberal government.

Back in 1971, the same Bill Davis rejected full funding. He said that extending financial aid would "fragment the present system beyond recognition and repair." In further quotes, he said, "To embark upon such a policy could not be, in reason or justice, limited to some faiths and denied to others," and, "The government would be obliged to provide a system for Protestant students, another for Jewish students and possibly still others." Those are all from Bill Davis.

Whatever happened to reason and justice? All three parties have a lot to account for. It is almost

incredible that only one member of the provincial Parliament, Norman Sterling, had the courage to publicly oppose Bill 30.

On this most important fundamental issue of church and state, our views were not represented in Parliament. In effect, we had no vote. The democratic system has failed us. In desperation, we conducted our own vote by mail in the newspapers of Renfrew county, Smiths Falls and North Bay.

In this next slide, on the left is what appeared in six Renfrew county newspapers; that is all of them. On the right are the results of the newspaper survey. A copy of this is appended to our submission.

Lack of adequate funding: Common sense tells us that two systems are less efficient than one. Duplicate facilities for Roman Catholic high schools are costing Ontario taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars every year, and already there is evidence that quality is not being maintained in both systems.

For example, in the city of Pembroke in Renfrew county, the Roman Catholic separate school board is planning to build a new \$10-million extension to its high school while at the same time a large school, surplus to the public board, remains empty. In the town of Renfrew, the same Roman Catholic board plans to build another new high school which would draw students from within a 20-mile radius and reduce the population in three public high schools. Millions of dollars are being squandered to entrench separateness and fragment the public high schools.

In a recent *Globe and Mail* report, it was noted: "Because of increasing enrolments and dwindling capital budgets, more than 200,000 children will attend school in portable classrooms this year. There will be about 7,500 portables in use this year, almost double the number of just four years ago. They provide enough space to fill more than 300 elementary schools."

"While the Ministry of Education has promised to spend \$300 million a year on capital costs over the next three years, requests for new schools and renovations have mushroomed to \$1.9 billion this year from \$600 million in 1986."

The *Globe and Mail* article continued with a litany of overcrowding and underfunding throughout the province. In Waterloo county there are enough portables to fill another 20 schools. In Markham, 13 portables were stuck together to form a self-contained unit, with 10 classrooms and two bathrooms, attached to the main building. Many portables have no wash-

rooms, so that grade school students in winter are forced to put on their coats and boots and trudge over to the main building.

The York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board now has 368 portables serving 11,000 students. School buses are doing three runs each morning, dropping off the first round of students a full hour before classes start.

The Carleton Board of Education will have 6,000 students in portables this year. While the Carleton board struggles to cope with growth in suburban areas, the neighbouring Ottawa Board of Education has closed schools as enrolment declines. The Sudbury Board of Education has opened two French-language schools since 1986, both of which are clusters of portables on high school grounds.

And on it goes. While the pattern is repeated in school boards across the province, the Ministry of Education finance manager, Don Gilroy, was quoted as follows, "Portables will always have a place in school planning."

In conclusion, we are now suffering the consequences of Bill 30 and our worst fears are being realized. Although our confidence in the democratic process has been severely shaken, the very fact that we are submitting this brief to the select committee on education proves that we have not lost hope. We refuse to believe that the all-party vote for Bill 30 truly represents the wishes of the majority of voters. Surely there is more than one member of Parliament who now believes that Bill 30 was a colossal and costly mistake. How many will have the courage to stand up and be counted?

I will close with another quote from Winston Churchill, which is not so well known: "Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on." I will let you interpret that any way you like.

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation.

Mr Keyes: I am one member of Parliament who is more than pleased to stand up and say that I wholeheartedly support the move of our government in providing Bill 30 and equitable funding across the province of Ontario to all students in our system.

One of the problems I have with your brief is that I have not found anywhere in it at all any suggestion of other directions that the government might take, unless I fail to read between the lines.

In our financing of education, we have tried to listen to every point of view. You are the 11th submission today, and we have listened each day

to almost comparable numbers who have given many indications of ways where they feel equity in financing could be improved upon. Does your group have any views in that vein at all? None is contained in your brief.

Mr Hilborn: Yes. We would like to see a phase-out of all financial support to denominational schools. This would mean a gradual transfer to private funding, private schools, for all denominational schools.

1650

Mr Keyes: Could you point to any other areas? You have not cited in your brief any of the areas where there is inadequacy and where the public system is suffering for funding, or any of those remedies. As I say, that is what we have been listening to now for our second week and they come from all sides, the French-language section as well as the separate school system as well as the public system.

Mr Hilborn: In particular, the provision for technical training has been very difficult in Pembroke. Courses in family studies were cut back in the separate school system. So those were two direct results in our own locality.

Mr Keyes: I do not quite understand that. You said cutbacks were in the separate school system for family studies. I do not see how that is germane to your argument that you want to have no funding to separate schools at all.

Mr Hilborn: Facing the existing situation, both systems are suffering in cases where there were insufficient students to justify programs that previously were in place. Two that I recall from our own district were technical training; I cannot identify the precise name of the course, but in the technical area it was very difficult to offer equal facilities to both systems at the same time. Technical facilities such as shop and trades are very expensive and it is difficult to provide equal facilities across the board.

Mr Keyes: But from what you have said—I do not want to belabour the point—it was not a lack of funding that created it. Your comment was there was a lack of students taking those courses that reduced the classes.

Mr Hilborn: Funding will fix everything. If there is funding available, of course, you can hire students and build buildings. Funding is what it is all about.

Mr Keyes: We can check it out, and certainly there was no shortage of dollars for the technical training classes or family studies in the separate board; you yourself said it was numbers of students. Perhaps your argument—I do not want to put words in your mouth—is that there was then a split between those who might have formally all been in one board and had sufficient students to justify, under government criteria, a class, I would say, in family studies, and now perhaps it was dissipated between two systems. Is that what you are getting at?

Mr Hilborn: That is an explanation. Yes, I would agree that is probably the explanation, but it certainly avoids the fundamental root of the whole problem, which is paying for two parallel systems, paying for expensive facilities: gymnasiums, auditoriums, musical and athletic facilities. It is obvious to anyone that two systems are going to cost more than one.

Will anyone stand up and be counted? You have.

Mr Keyes: I have. I will be very happy to stand up and be counted on the side of full educational opportunity for all students in the province under the two systems.

Mr Hilborn: Do you support the principle of denominational schools?

Mr Keyes: No, I support the principle of the two systems, publicly funded systems, as guaranteed by the Constitution of this country.

Mr Hilborn: Anyone else?

Mrs O'Neill: I certainly do.

Mr Hilborn: Do you? Do you believe that one religious denomination should be supported and no others? What about you?

The Chairman: If no other members of the committee have questions, I will thank you for your presentation, Mr Hilborn.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until tomorrow in Sudbury.

The committee adjourned at 1659.

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From the Friends of Public Education in Ontario Inc-Renfrew County Chapter:

Hilborn, John



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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Financement du système scolaire



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday 20 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday 20 September 1989

The committee met at 1457 at the Peter Piper Inn in Sudbury.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

FINANCEMENT DU SYSTÈME SCOLAIRE (suite)

The Vice-Chairman: We will call to order the meeting of the select committee. We have the Kirkland Lake and District Roman Catholic Separate School Board presenting first today, originally scheduled to go at three o'clock, and then we will go down the list from there. We appreciate the patience of everyone involved, and on behalf of Air Canada and CP, I guess, I apologize for this delay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is only CP.

The Vice-Chairman: It is Air Canada with me.

Perhaps you would introduce yourself and those folks with you for the purpose of Hansard. We have set aside half an hour for your presentation and questions. Go ahead.

KIRKLAND LAKE AND DISTRICT ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Joliat: I would like to thank, first of all, the select committee on education on the financing of education for the opportunity to appear before it today. My name is Marcel Joliat. I am the chairman of the Kirkland Lake and District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. We were going to have Mary O'Connor but she was not able to come, probably due to Air Canada as well, although we were driving. On my right is Pascal LaRouche, the director of education of our board.

The Kirkland Lake and District Roman Catholic Separate School Board serves the families of about 1,280 elementary students in nine schools. About 60 per cent of our students are in the French first-language schools. Our jurisdiction extends from near Matheson in the north to near Earleton in the south, about 120 kilometres; and from Matachewan in the west to the Quebec border, Virginiatown and Kearns in the east, about 120 kilometres as well. Kirkland Lake is about two and a half hours north of North Bay on

Highway 11 and about an hour and a half southeast of Timmins.

Our board representatives are here today to support and to ask the legislative committee's support of the government's proposal to provide fairer access to corporate and commercial tax assessment by Roman Catholic separate school boards.

In blunt financial and practical terms, I will try to explain why this initiative is so important to our board. Our board, its schools and educational programs are compared by potential parents-clients to the Kirkland Lake Board of Education. Here is a five-year comparison of the amount of money, on a per pupil basis, the two boards spent on elementary education.

In 1985, the separate school board spent \$3,015.87 compared to \$3,354 for the Kirkland Lake board, a difference of \$339; in 1986, \$3,168 versus \$3,268, a difference of \$460; in 1987, we spent \$3,144 compared to their \$3,956, a difference of \$812; in 1988, \$3,387 versus their \$4,231 for a difference of \$844; and in 1989—just an estimate on our part—\$3,161 versus \$4,023 for a difference of \$862.

Expressed in other terms and based on the 1989 figures, the Kirkland Lake separate school board has 27.3 per cent less money per pupil to spend on the education of its students. If our board had the financial resources to spend at the same per pupil level as the board of education, we would have about \$1,077,000 more to spend on our children's education.

Please bear in mind that only since the 1987 budget year has our mill rate been equal to that of the Kirkland Lake board. The factors that give rise to this gross inequity are as follows:

Almost all boards, public and separate, in Ontario spend over the approved ceilings. Ability to spend over the ceilings is related to the amount of assessment a board controls.

Here are the assessment bases upon which our two boards can draw for over-ceiling expenditures. I am using the 1987 figures.

The separate school board has a \$5.8-million residential assessment compared to a \$13-million residential assessment to the board of education. For the commercial we have \$1.9 million compared to \$23.6 million to the public board. The total assessment to the separate board is \$7.7

million compared to \$36.6 million for the board of education.

When our board raises taxes by one mill, we realize \$7,700 for our schools. On a per pupil basis, the Kirkland Lake board has 6.2 times the ability to spend over the ceiling. This does not compare the assessment figures I just gave you of \$36.6 million, because they are equalization factors that come in to give us the 6.2 times figures, for an assessment of about \$46,000 to \$47,000 per mill.

In order to compensate for this horrendous difference in ability to fund education, the board raised money by raising its mill rates. During the 1984-86 period, our separate school mill rate was up 45 per cent higher than the public school mill rate. The results were predictable: We lost large numbers of potential separate school supporters, residential and commercial, in particular Roman Catholics who had no children in our schools.

Beginning in 1987, the board resolved to do something about its lamentable financial situation. With the help of the Ministry of Education's regional office in North Bay, we conducted a financial review with the financial branch in Toronto. Their report of July 1987 was most helpful, with the result that our 1988 and 1989 budgets have been at or near approved government ceilings and our local mill rates have been equal to those of the Kirkland Lake Board of Education.

However, in order to do this, the board has had to cut down on programs and services which most boards take for granted. Some examples of the actions we have taken are: reduced maintenance and custodial staff; reduced central office staff; cuts in trustees' honoraria; operating without a superintendent of business for most of the past two years—in fact, he just started Monday of this week; larger class sizes; no library teachers and no library technicians; reduced intramural sports programs; fewer professional development opportunities for staff; reduced consultant staff; elimination of most community education programs; elimination of all adult education programs, and also reduced special programs such as music and art. We could go on to a few more.

The vital program which our board cannot provide our parents and students is a Catholic high school. Everyone recognizes that students' years from 13 to 19 are crucial in their physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development. Our Catholic school board wants to provide Catholic secondary education for our young people, just as most other Catholic boards do in

other parts of the province. Our funding situation does not appear at this time to offer that possibility. Why should funding stand in the way of a Catholic board's providing such an essential service as a high school education?

The program cuts had direct consequences. When the board could not provide the kinds of services other boards take for granted, the teachers' associations, comparing themselves to the rest of the province, went on strike for 41 days, a provincial record of dubious distinction.

The cause of the strike, once again, was due to the problem of comparisons being made to provincial comparators and standards. Trying to impose provincial trends for class size, preparation time and multiple grades on a board which has small schools, large distances between schools and language-of-instruction factors in each community does not work with the current level of funding. Most of our students lost about 22 per cent of their school year as a result of the teachers' strike, caused in part by a funding dilemma.

In real terms, these are the kinds of problems that the current unequal financial system generates. The essential elements of education are provincial. Each local board deals with the provincial curriculum and evaluation criteria. Local students compete for post-secondary positions on a provincial basis, from apprenticeship programs to universities and colleges. The salaries, benefits and working conditions we offer are all compared on a provincial basis. In significant terms, only funding of education is a local matter. If the Kirkland Lake separate school board is to have expectations placed on it equal to the Kirkland Lake Board of Education and to the rest of the province, it must have equal access to the financial resources needed to pay for these expectations.

Our board will be able to provide comparable programs and services and to ensure equality of educational opportunity to our students when we are funded equally and fairly as compared to other boards.

This is the reason the government initiative to give our board fairer access to corporate and commercial assessment is critical. Too often "educational finance" becomes an abstract term and we often lose sight of the essential: the children and their education.

We are trying to demonstrate to you in concrete terms that finances and equality of educational opportunity have important consequences for our students and their education. The kinds of cuts we have had to make in our

education programs have been very hard. Our parents and students have a legitimate right to ask: Do we truly have equal educational opportunity in Kirkland Lake when compared to other parts of Ontario?

The Kirkland Lake and District Roman Catholic Separate School Board must have the financial tools necessary to compete with its neighbouring boards and to provide a quality educational program. Our Catholic schools are schools with a difference: a belief put into practice that home, school and church work together to form complete human beings physically, intellectually and spiritually.

1510

We applaud the government for this first step in redressing an historic inequality and urge the select committee to support the fairer sharing of assessment in this province.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much for your brief. It seems to have a very strong focus in one direction.

I would like you to take me back to page 4, if you would, please. You are talking about provincial trends. There is one area where I am not sure of your intent: "Language-of-instruction factors in each community" are one thing that "does not work with the current level of funding." Could you tell us what you mean by that?

Mr Joliat: Basically, in the outlying areas such as Matachewan or Larder Lake, we have to provide a French service to our students, who are mostly French. I would say 99.9 per cent of our students are French and we do have to provide these services in those schools. To provide those services in those schools we have a pupil-teacher ratio of approximately, in one school, 14 to 1 and we even have one at 12 to 1. So the extra costs to provide the educational services in those schools are enormous because of staffing that we have to provide with that low a PTR.

Mrs O'Neill: Do the factors for small schools not help you in that situation?

Mr Joliat: They do to a certain extent, but not to the full extent.

Mrs O'Neill: Is it because it is a second-language or a French-language school that that is more expensive, or do you have English-language schools that are of the same size with the same problem?

Mr Joliat: No. Our outlying schools are French. The in-town schools are not too bad. We have a PTR of around one to 15.5 to 16 in town.

Mrs O'Neill: So it is mainly pupil-teacher ratio, rather than textbooks and that kind of thing, that you are suggesting is the straw that is breaking the camel's back.

Mr Joliat: Basically, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Could I just ask a supplementary on that, if that is possible? The present French-as-a-first-language grants which are designed, I suppose, to help schools like the Matachewan school, are, I gather from provincial data, \$268 a pupil differentiation. Is that the grant we are primarily talking about here? Can you give us specifics about what the deficit is, if I can put it that way?

Mr Joliat: Can you elaborate on those figures? Is \$268 adequate?

Mr LaRouche: I am not certain if \$268 is the exact figure, because it is now not divided and specified as it was in the general legislative grants previously. In so far as the shortfall goes, just to give you a concrete example, in l'Ecole St John Bosco in Matachewan we have 33 equivalent students with two and a half teachers, in addition to keeping the building open and the transportation requirements that are there. So those are the kinds of problems it engenders.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So putting that in real terms, you would normally have perhaps one teacher, if that was a straight anglophone school, and a regular-sized school as well, and therefore the amount per elementary student would be a few thousand dollars, basically. If these figures I have just received from the ministry are correct, your only difference would be \$268 for the fact of the French language and another amount presumably because of the size of the school. I do not know what the total of that would be, because I do not have those kind of things together. I do not know if Leon knows. What would the total be?

Mr Brumer: French language is \$268 per pupil. Small schools for Kirkland Lake is \$164.66, for the small schools per pupil. The others are small boards.

The Vice-Chairman: Before you go on, could I suggest perhaps the two of you sit at this table where the microphones are, for Hansard? That does not go on the record unless we repeat it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will repeat it for now, if that would be helpful.

The Vice-Chairman: We have a table there with a couple of microphones. It would be appreciated.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So the ministry official basically says that the figure for 1989 for the

French-as-a-first-language grant for the elementary panel will be \$268—which, by the way, is up from \$258 last year, only a 3.9 per cent increase—and that the amount for the small school would be \$164.66 for your board. On top of that, there may be other factors to do with the size of your own board, and that would be brought into account. But clearly, in this kind of school it is not going to make anything like the thousands of dollars' difference that are involved here. It is only going to make several hundred dollars' worth of difference.

Mr Joliat: And there is not even any inclination to try to transport these outlying-area students to our in-town schools because of the distances.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation. The mandate of this committee is to try to find a different and innovative way of going after funds, not necessarily based on real estate taxes. Your board is an example of why something has to occur, because in spite of all the formulas that are added for French language, for small schools, small boards, etc, you are still way, way below.

The \$28.9-million difference in assessment: Is that partly due to problems with enumeration, which occurred just prior to the election and was a very confusing issue? I notice you say that a lot of the Catholics who were Roman Catholic school supporters, because of a 45 per cent increase all of a sudden pulled away from their board and supported the public board for pure and simple monetary purposes. Do you see a different way of approaching enumeration, or a different way of collecting taxes, if you will, based on whatever you feel? We are here to listen to that one as well.

Mr Joliat: I suppose one way to look at it would probably be a provincial pooling assessment, a per capita, per student distribution of grants, assessments; even in the local communities, a closer sharing of the assessment between boards. We are right now working on going back to get the people who had left us because of the 45 per cent difference in our mill rates. We are being successful, but it takes time to convince people to come back to where the tax base is equal; also, to try to convince people that this is not just a flash in the pan, that this new board and the new director have worked jointly just to create the same mill rate for a year or two. We have to prove to them that this is what we are striving to do, to maintain the same mill rate level as the other board and try to keep our expenditures at ceiling.

As stated before, we are sacrificing some of our programs.

Mr Villeneuve: Would you go beyond the commercial and industrial assessment, in other words, recognizing that income tax possibly should be a levy towards paying for education; and also maintaining to some degree, but maybe with less weight, the real estate assessment for support of school boards? Could you just give us your thoughts on that one?

Mr Joliat: That could be a very interesting concept, to cover the cost just like any other cost of provincial structures. Sure, that would be a very interesting concept: straight out of the income tax.

Mr Villeneuve: Finally, you are quite obviously one of the so-called poor boards of the province, and we do have quite a number of those in the north and in the east. The general legislative grants from Ontario come out later and later on an annual basis. How serious is that in trying to establish a budget and operate a very tight financial situation within the board you represent?

Mr Joliat: It is very hard indeed. We were able to somewhat cushion the blow of the cost we had to incur to pay our expenses until such time as we did receive some provincial grants. The later the grants are held back, the more costly it is to boards.

1520

Mr Keyes: Going back to one of Mr Villeneuve's questions, have you had a chance to look at the impact for your board financially with the move to sharing of the commercial-industrial assessment? Not knowing the makeup of your area as to the percentage of people supporting it, and with a new business administrator just starting this week, as you have said, I am sure he has not resolved that one. Have you had a chance, through your director or members of the board, to see whether that will make a very major impact on change for you? Have you any suggestions on it as to whether you think the formula base that has been presented is adequate?

Mr Joliat: Did we have such figures in our 1987 financial review?

Mr LaRouche: The Ministry of Education provided a financial study to boards and showed all the boards in the province and how much it would affect each of them. In a six-year period, there is some benefit to us; from what the ministry's figures relate to, it is a total of \$25,000, approximately \$4,000 and change per year. It comes out to about a total of about

\$25,000 over a six-year period. We are not greatly encouraged by that at this point in time. We are highly sceptical about the figures. Perhaps they were just a first try. I feel that if we can begin to right some of the imbalances you can see in our assessment picture, it will help us quite a bit.

In terms of questions related, for example, to cash flow and the time of when the grants come up, I think the ministry has done a couple of things in the past couple of years that have been of benefit to boards such as ours. For example, they have been providing a higher percentage of our funds from 1 January on than was done in the past. I think also funding up front the capital projects that were approved has been of assistance to us as well.

Mr Keyes: You really have not looked too hopefully, then, at the moment, at the assessment redistribution, and pooling and sharing. It does not look as though it is going to be of much benefit to you?

Mr LaRouche: Based on what the government's figures are, no.

Mr Keyes: And you have not been able, through your own municipal people, perhaps, and the assessment office, to come up with anything that looks more promising?

Mr LaRouche: For our separate school board it is the classic problem as in any other separate school board in the province, for any other corporation: How do you identify who Roman Catholic shareholders and/or partners or partial owners are? For us that is just a case of speculation at this time. Obviously the office of municipal affairs cannot do it, because no record is kept of that kind of information.

Mr Keyes: So you would favour, most likely, provincial pooling of that resource and then bringing it back out on a per capita basis.

Looking at the issue of trying to provide high school, you have a small board of 1,280 students. Have you tried to project ahead as to how you would ever provide secondary education for such a small group of people? Distance is your major problem. Do you see yourself establishing "units" within some of the existing high schools in shared arrangements? You do not want children riding for two and a half hours on buses to get to one central place. Even that would not bring in that many of your students.

Mr Joliat: With all due respect, this is being done now in the Kirkland Lake Board of Education. All of our secondary facilities are within the town of Kirkland Lake, so they are

being bused 120 kilometres both ways. To provide the smaller school, you are quite right in saying that the cost would be enormous. Then again, we feel that if we are going to offer Catholic education, we should be able to offer it from junior kindergarten right on up to Ontario academic course. There should be a way to fund some of the smaller schools. I am sure we are not unique in our situation in having a smaller secondary school.

Mr Keyes: You have not really carried that forth. What do they use nowadays? Four hundred or 500 is looked upon as the reasonable small-sized high school. I look at an area like yours and almost want to hearken back 40 years and say you almost need the "continuation school" model I went to school in, where your grades 9 and 10 were provided in the same facility as K-8, and the teachers were qualified to teach. Although they did not have access to all the same programming as a composite high school, at least they were in the milieu that the separate school system would be, and could still receive an education for at least a couple of those years.

Mr LaRouche: If you take the board's jurisdiction as a whole, of all the elementary students, public and separate, in the jurisdiction, we have about 60 per cent of the elementary students in total. In other words, our elementary panel is larger than the local board of education's elementary panel. Therefore, I think it is reasonable to assume that when we become a K-13 board or a K-OAC board, the same kinds of figures will also reflect over grades 9, 10, 11, 12 and Ontario academic course.

Mr Keyes: Is there just one high school in Kirkland Lake that serves the entire population of both boards?

Mr LaRouche: That is correct.

Mr Joliat: Actually, there are two within the same building. There is a French public high school and a public English high school.

Mr Keyes: They are sharing facilities?

Mr LaRouche: That is correct.

Mr Joliat: They are now, between them.

Mr Keyes: But it is the public board that is French?

Mr Joliat: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are a number of things I would like to try to clear up. If we could turn to your figures on page 2, for instance, I am not clear how you come up with your \$3,161 figure for the amount. Have you made some sort

of adjustment because of the strike for those kinds of figures? My calculation about what the base would be for a board in your situation would be closer to \$3,900, the basic grant being \$3,235. That is the level expected by the province, the special grant to you of the \$651 as a small board, and other things would be on top of that. How did you arrive at \$3,161?

Mr LaRouche: These were adjusted. They were also factored out of transportation, and also factored out of both were capital projects for both of the boards. It is also based on the report and the budget submission that we submit to the ministry for our grants.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What percentage of the \$3,161, to use your figure at the moment, would be provincial dollars and what percentage of that would be coming from the mill rate, approximately?

Mr LaRouche: We are granted approximately a 93 per cent level.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you give me some comparison? This is a tough question and I do not expect you to have it at your fingertips, but is the situation of the Kapuskasing Catholic board, the boards in Timmins and surrounding areas similar to yours? If they were to come before us, which unfortunately they are not, would they show the same kind of discrepancy between their dollars because of the commercial-based argument that you brought forward, or would it be greatly different than what you are presenting to us? Do you have any idea?

Mr LaRouche: Just as a matter of degree, I think it would be very close to the same. All separate school boards are in the same relative disadvantage position relative to their local board of education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I find it an interesting decision, and I am not sure which works better as a disincentive to contributors to the system: to have a higher mill rate, and therefore some people to move off for that reason, or to cut programs back in such a way as you are showing, which dramatically would say there is a difference of quality here between what you can provide and what the public board can provide. Have the other Catholic boards in your area with this problem gone to a mill rate which is quite differentiated from their local public board or have they had to hold back on program? Is that the way they have gone in the recent past?

Mr LaRouche: It has been a principle accepted by separate school boards across the province that you try to maintain at almost any

cost a mill rate that is attractive to all ratepayers, because only Roman Catholics can choose between the two. So it is safe to say that in almost every single case across the province, separate school board mill rates are equal or very close to public school board mill rates comparatively.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: For the last two years that you have tried to do this, have you done any evaluation of what has happened to your—why do I want to use the French?

M LaRouche : Il y a un problème.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What are they in English? I cannot remember any more.

Have you noticed whether the decline has continued, held the same or gone better?

Mr Joliat: I would say that we have gained back. I would say roughly 27 to 29 per cent have come back to us, and we are still working hard to go back and get the rest of the 45 per cent that had left us. As I said, we do have to maintain the same level of mill rate to prove to them that we are indeed serious in trying to maintain the same mill rates.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for coming today. Our time is at an end. I would like to thank you both personally and the Kirkland Lake and District Roman Catholic Separate School Board for this very interesting brief. We appreciate your taking the time to come here.

Mr Joliat: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Vice-Chairman: Our next presenters—I believe I am going in the proper order—are the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 30, Algoma. Could I ask you folks to come forward? Perhaps we could clear that part of the room so that we could get on with the business of the committee. Somebody get the hook.

We would like to welcome you to the committee and ask you to begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard. We have set aside half an hour for your presentation and questions from the committee, so you may begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION, DISTRICT 30, ALGOMA

Mr Agnew: My name is James Agnew. I am past-president of District 30, Algoma. I am accompanied by Sharon Indrevold, who is president of the Sault Ste Marie division of that

district and is also vice-president of District 30, Algoma.

At the beginning of our presentation we list the recommendations which we are addressing in the presentation. There are nine of them.

The first one deals with the general legislative grant, that it be raised to a level at which, when it is combined with the mandated mill rate, the allocated per-pupil allotment reasonably reflects the cost of education delivery in the province.

The second one is that great caution be exercised in making any changes to the grant weighting factors.

Third is that downloading of costs of current programs and initiatives from the province to the local board of education be stopped.

Fourth, that unified school boards as a means of reducing costly duplication of services be pursued in the province.

Fifth, that the northern factor for small boards of education be continued.

Sixth, that the equalized mill rate be stabilized and that it not be used as a mechanism for reducing the provincial share of costs within the grant plan.

Seventh, that the provincial government address immediately the discrepancy between the amount allocated for compensation to boards during the phase-in period of the sharing of commercial and industrial assessment and the actual cost.

Eighth, that the province begin a program that will result in the provincial funding of 60 per cent of the cost of education exclusive of the capital grants system and contributions to the teachers' superannuation fund.

Ninth, that the practice of the provincial government making inroads into the municipal tax base of boards be curtailed.

Like the previous presenters, we are pleased to be here to make this presentation to the select committee on the future of educational finance relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

District 30 covers a large geographical area of the province which takes in three public boards of education: Central Algoma, Michipicoten and Sault Ste Marie. These three boards of education provide an interesting cross-section of the types of assessment and fiscal problems at the school board level in the province.

The Central Algoma Board of Education, located in a largely rural jurisdiction, operates one secondary school, Central Algoma Secondary School, at Desbarats, Ontario. The area does not have a separate school board, but two

neighbouring separate school boards, Sault Ste Marie and the North Shore, extend into the same tax jurisdiction as Central Algoma.

The Michipicoten Board of Education operates two high schools, one français and one English, on one campus which is situated in the mine-mill community of Wawa. There is a coterminous separate school board, but there is no separate school extension in this jurisdiction.

Sault Ste Marie includes a city of more than 80,000 people and a sparsely populated area to the north of the city. It has a large residential and industrial-commercial tax base which has at its core a single employer, Algoma Steel. There is a coterminous separate school board which operates both a français and an English secondary school system.

All of these jurisdictions have concerns about the current state and the future direction of the financing of education in the province of Ontario. Michipicoten, for example, is forced to rely on a notoriously cyclical mining industry for its local tax base. As well, the school size and the isolation make education delivery very expensive. Michipicoten is a case study which shows the importance of grant weighting factors and the northern allowance as a means of bringing some fairness into the grant plan.

Central Algoma is faced with declining enrolment, at least in part as a result of Bill 30, and related small school problems. Sault Ste Marie has gone through school closure and transfer, enrolment decline and is now facing the impact of pooling commercial-industrial assessment. Indeed, in all three jurisdictions, there is concern about a review of the funding model as mentioned in the introduction to the grant schedule that promises that incremental changes in the education funding model will be implemented in subsequent years.

The three principles that have governed education finance in Ontario for many decades are equity, adequacy and autonomy.

Equity or fairness in the realm of education finance means that all boards of education, whether they are rich or poor in terms of local assessment wealth, must have the same opportunity to deliver quality education. The variances that exist in population densities and economic wealth and the problems of isolation should not debilitate a board of education.

Adequacy means that there must be enough resources allocated to education across the province. In Ontario this means that the local and provincial resources, when combined, must be adequate to provide quality education.

The third principle of education finance in the province is that of autonomy. Decisions in education are made at the local level by locally elected trustees. While it is true that these decisions are made within the framework of overall provincial educational objectives, the board of education has, as part of its mandate, the necessity to reflect local needs.

Since the 1960s, the mechanism that attempts to address these principles has been the foundation grant plan. One objective of the plan is to use a combination of local and provincial income to boards so that all boards can spend up to a certain level or ceiling. Almost from its inception, a controversial aspect of the plan has been what that level should be.

Even a cursory look at the current spending of boards over ceiling indicates the inadequacy of the current ceiling on this grant. The current year estimates indicate that \$1.9 billion will be spent on education in the province in the category of overceiling or unrecognized costs. Since all this money must be garnered from local taxpayers in addition to what has been deemed to be their fair share, it is a significant additional burden.

However, another consideration is the plight of the board that has a poor local assessment. For this board, no matter how much the local mill rate is raised, the revenues will not be enough to compensate for the shortfall created by an inadequate ceiling. As a result, a plan that was designed to ensure equity does not treat all boards equally but has created a system of inequities that is based on local assessment wealth.

One could argue, for example, that if the level of per pupil grant were fair, there would be no reason for separate school boards to campaign so strongly for a share of the commercial assessment, and minimal impact on public boards that lost this local assessment. In fact, what has happened is that after pooling we have a new set of discrepancies in which boards with a rich residential assessment are better off than the previous winners. In the realm of equality of educational opportunity, whole communities should not be winners and losers to a provincial grant system.

An additional concern here is the acceleration in over-the-ceiling expenditure. As the chart below indicates, the amount of overceiling expenditure has doubled since 1986 and increased 40 per cent since last year.

In 1988, 98.6 per cent of the public secondary boards in Ontario were over ceiling, and boards teaching 25 per cent of the students in the province were spending from \$1,400 to \$2,600

more than the recognized expenditure level. That is in the attachment at the back.

Autonomy is the right of local boards to govern their needs and to receive financial support through municipal tax sources. Over the past number of years, the funding practices of the province have put a great deal of pressure on this source of revenue and consequently on board autonomy.

First, the inadequacy of the per-pupil grant ceiling has put tremendous pressure on the local mill rate and consequently has limited local initiatives. An analysis of the per-pupil grant for 1989 shows a decline of \$31.4 million or 1.1 per cent from the previous year. In a year when inflation exceeded five per cent and student population increased by two per cent, the grant money for basic educational delivery declined by 1.1 per cent.

Second, the government has increased the equalized mill rate in 1989. This increase in the minimum or mandated mill rate that each board must pay on its assessment has the effect of increasing local tax even if a board is in a standstill situation. Thus there is even more pressure on the local board. One estimate indicates that \$350 million in costs have been transferred to the local ratepayer in this way. Small wonder that some local school ratepayers saw increases of up to 20 per cent in their municipal taxes this year.

This follows a trend in recent years that has seen the equalized mill rate for secondary schools rise more than that for elementary, which puts additional pressure on boards trying to raise overceiling revenue.

There is a third concern as well within the realm of board autonomy and that is the intrusion of the provincial government into the local property tax base. The \$1-per-square-foot tax on commercial properties in the greater Toronto area is an example of this. The municipal level of government has lost control of this property tax in the same way that pooling of commercial and industrial assessment has taken the tax out of the public realm.

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The commercial taxpayer is forced to pay a portion of his taxes to a system over which he may have no control and in which he may have no effective input. The disposition of revenues raised by lot levies is a further example of this incursion. While it is true that lot levies are a local option, the disposition of the revenues from them represents yet another form of pooling. The

money will be distributed to local boards on the basis of provincially approved needs.

We would also like to point out that while lot levies have only very limited relevance as a revenue source in northern Ontario, these boards still lose in that the participation level for the provincial government drops from 75 per cent to 60 per cent for approved capital projects. It is another example of downloading of costs from the province to the municipality.

Another aspect of downloading is the apparent special initiatives such as junior kindergarten and full-day kindergarten. These initiatives begin life as full-grant programs but will eventually be part of the basic program and will have a high local share and, no doubt, an overceiling component. Without arguing the social merits of this initiative, we wish to point out that it has reduced the demands for municipal day care funding, which has a high level of grant, and filled the need in the schools which have a low level of grant. This creates more savings for the provincial Treasury in the long run. Is it any wonder that announcements of new, fully funded initiatives are greeted by many with scepticism?

It has been the frequently repeated promise of both the Liberal government and of the previous Conservative government that the extension of separate school funding would not be at the expense of public school boards. Like the promises of a return to the 60 per cent level of funding, this appears to be another empty promise. Already school boards have lost significant money because the province is unwilling to increase its share to even the level of two years ago, but rather wishes to pay for the cost of extension by transferring its increased costs to the local ratepayer.

The result of this is an increasing burden on the residential taxpayer and a heavier reliance on this regressive form of tax. The objective of the government seems to be to address the problem of the disadvantaged separate school boards by creating a parallel set of disadvantaged public boards. Instead of aspiring to excellence, public and separate boards are made equal in that they must survive on inadequate per-pupil grants.

The pooling of commercial and industrial assessment, however, raises some important new questions in this debate. The resources of the public school board, previously used to address overceiling expenditures, are reduced. The significance of the reduction will vary and will create a new set of boards with assessment wealth; those with a high percentage of residential and farm assessment, as I have stated earlier.

A realignment of disparities is not a solution to inequities.

There exist, however, two greater concerns: what happens after the phase-in period and how does the province propose to address the problem of public boards which are disadvantaged by pooling even after the infusion of grant money which was designed to prevent such an occurrence? The answer to the first question is, no doubt, that the public boards have lost part of their revenue base and the phase-in period allows the government to make the impact sufficiently remote from the event and sufficiently obscured in the rest of the grant regulation issues so that the real political impact will be negligible. As has been pointed out previously, the government has already recouped more than the compensation to public boards by the cost in adjustments like the one to the equalized mill rate.

The answer to the second question will have to be more direct and clear. In conjunction with the pooling announcement, \$180 million was allocated by the Treasury for phase-in. Of this, \$165 million was added directly to the grants to compensate all public boards. However, the impact on certain boards over and above this infusion is estimated to be \$43 million to \$45 million. Where does the additional money come from?

An exploration of the situation in Sault Ste Marie is informative. The public board of education will experience a net revenue loss over the phase-in period of \$554,000, while the separate school board will experience an increase of \$1,804,000. The impact of this is an increase of \$13 for the average public school ratepayer and a decrease of \$85 for the average separate ratepayer. There is, as yet, no answer from the Ministry of Education on where the money will come from for Sault Ste Marie or for the other boards listed below so that in no case will a public board experience a net loss of revenue. The boards are listed there, northern and southern.

A final concern in this area is the increasing fragmentation of the educational community. In Sault Ste Marie, both boards of education are required to provide services to both French and English electors. The French-language electors to the public board represent approximately 50 students. This fragmentation of the educational community creates costly duplication of services. To remedy this situation the government should explore fully the structure of educational governance with a view to implementing a system of unified boards which would reduce the administrative costs of educational delivery.

District 30, Algoma, of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has deep concerns about the future direction of education financing in the province. Decisions on education funding have to move in a direction which will mean a reduction in the load on the local taxpayer and back to the 60 per cent commitment. Education must become a priority of this government, which means the decline in allocation of provincial funds for education must be reversed.

The money which is spent on education must be spent wisely to ensure that the residents of this province receive the best return on this investment. The government should begin an investigation of unified school boards as a means of eliminating costly duplication at the administrative level.

Finally, the "smoke and mirrors" approach of introducing provincial initiatives and passing the cost on to the local ratepayer must be curtailed.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We do have a question from Mr Johnston and we have approximately 10 minutes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want to be clear about a couple of figures, if I can. If you can go to near the end of your presentation first in terms of the supposed compensation package for the phase-in, are you basically saying that the \$554,000, or \$13 a ratepayer, at the end of the phase-in—

Mr Agnew: Cumulative during the phase-in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —cumulative during the phase-in will be over and above the total of \$180 million which has been promised?

Mr Agnew: Over the total of \$165 million, which has been applied to the grants, in the ministry release they show each year, and it is simply the figure for each year multiplied by five. It is \$110,000 a year that the Sault Ste Marie public board is short.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You may remember that the day after it was announced, the figure jumped from \$180 million to approximately \$210 million, and nobody has been really sure what the real figure is.

Mr Agnew: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am wondering if we should not see if the Ministry of Revenue, with the Ministry of Education, has not come up with a more firm figure on that compensation package, because as far as I know, I have seen nothing more publicly on it than that which has caused the Sault Ste Marie board and yourselves to be concerned about the potential discrepancy.

Mr Agnew: In doing my research for this I consulted with the business administrator for the

board. The Media Watch clipping at the back is about the business administrator. He gave me the correspondence. The figures came from his correspondence to the ministry. This was about 10 days ago and he had no reply as yet to clarify what was going to happen to the cumulative loss over the five-year period.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So if a board decides the Sault board is \$500,000-plus under and is not to get that from the ratepayers, then you really do wonder how much that is going to affect some of the larger boards that are listed here already. You are the first group that has actually raised that and reminded me of that potential difficulty that is lying out there at the moment.

I just want to thank you for the document. I think it is very useful to us and lays down in fairly condemning fashion the kind of distancing from financing of local education that Ontario seems to be undergoing. I think it is a very effective presentation for that purpose and a little depressing, I would think, for those people who are in the field at the moment.

I do not have any other specific questions to ask, but just want to thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Mr Brumer has made a note of your suggestions and we will get that information.

Mr Villeneuve: You make an interesting observation here.

Mr Agnew: I am sorry there is no numbering on the pages.

Mr Villeneuve: I will be looking for some guidance here. In fact, what happens is that after pooling, we have a new set of discrepancies in which boards with rich residential assessments are better off than the previous winners. In the realm of equality of educational opportunity, whole communities should not be winners and losers to the provincial grant system.

Quite obviously, after pooling of the industrial and commercial tax base, we are left with somewhat of a different dilemma. Lot levies would probably compound that because those rich areas would be the ones that would be subject to good, heavy lot levies.

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We are going in one direction here and many of our rural and nongrowth areas, in eastern and northern Ontario particularly, are going to be left behind again. This is really the major mandate of this committee, to bring some equity into funding. The pooling would probably do some alleviation, depending on the way that the ministry would allocate those pooled funds. You

have outlined, I think, a very real snag here; once this occurs, we are going to shift the problem but it will still be there.

Are we talking about a possibility of a combined real estate assessment to support schools along with an income tax? Could you just give this committee some guidance in that area from your perspective, which would be a lose/lose situation?

Mr Agnew: In the ideal world, the ceiling would address the cost and then you would determine the participation of the local in it on a fair basis. If you cannot arrive at that, I think you have to look at general revenues, which would be income tax, sales tax and other provincially garnered taxes, to create some fairness in the system and put more money into the system.

Mr Villeneuve: Certainly it is something that we will have to look at very seriously as we make recommendations to the government. I think you bring a very valid point here that a combination of lot levies, which will be high in those areas of rapid growth, which are the metropolitan and surrounding metropolitan areas, just shift it around.

Again, simply regarding your comments that a lot of times we get caught in a situation where the government tells us that it is funding education at 57 per cent of approved costs, we have heard that; you are not the first. In effect, it is in the mid-40s, and in some areas it could possibly be slightly below the mid-40s. Could you just comment on how it has affected your board and your family of schools here because of the fact that you have had to go considerably over the ceiling?

Mr Agnew: In the last five years, the northern Ontario boards of Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie have reached overceiling levels that previously were southern Ontario levels. When you look at the ability of the community to pay, the amount that comes from the mill rate, that is a significant local tax effort and that is what is happening. I think Sudbury had an 18 or 19 per cent increase in taxes last year and Sault Ste Marie had 11 per cent.

What is happening simply is that the communities are paying that additional effort, but those are communities that have a tax base. Communities like central Algoma where—I do not have the exact figures right now—92 per cent, let's say, of the grant level comes from the province, they are leveraged in such a way that it does not matter what mill rate they put on. They cannot raise enough money to spend over ceilings in any significant way.

Mr Villeneuve: That was the case of the board just previous to your presentation: 92 per cent. As we see it here, we may be compounding the problem instead of alleviating it.

Mr Keyes: I think I will probably go back to Mr Johnston's point. I wonder if you have given any thought to alternative ways of finding more money, as your brief recommends to the government. What do you see as the local responsibility if you are going to have accountability at the local level and the autonomy you spoke about? Are you saying that you think it is appropriate that the local ones should be paying 40 per cent of total costs and the government 60 per cent of total costs rather than approved costs?

Mr Agnew: I think that would be fair on a province-wide basis. It would give that local participation and it would mean that you do not get the kinds of discrepancies which cause such an outcry when any adjustment is made to the assessment base. I think the 60 per cent level of some reasonable per pupil cost in the province—do not overlook the weighting factors either. The weighting factors are very important to northern Ontario boards. If it were not for the weighting factors, there would be no fairness in educational delivery in Wawa. It simply would not be fair.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just wanted to get an idea from you about why the overceiling levels have escalated so dramatically in total dollar terms in the last couple of years. By the table you have given us, in 1989 there is a projection of \$550 million over ceiling.

Mr Agnew: Right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that just the fact that we are way below inflationary increases in the general level of grants that are coming out, or is it additional programs that are now being thrown on to the local levy that used to be entirely provincially funded, or what is it? From your own local board's example, where you had to go for a—did you say an 11 per cent increase?

Mr Agnew: I think it was. I am not sure of the increase.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have been hearing 11 per cent, 13 per cent, 17 per cent in various boards. Do you know what it was that made that up? Even if the province is dealing with only one or two percentage points actual increase out of a cost-of-living increase of, say, five per cent or so average across the province, that still does not explain entirely this large an increase in terms of receiving expenditure.

Is this pressure on new programs that are being demanded by the local community, or is it more a

matter of the stuff that is being shifted down to you from the senior level and a failure to maintain the cost of living over several years now?

Mr Agnew: A lot of it is the failure of the basic per pupil grant to keep up with inflation, and this year we are going down. The basic grant's going down 1.1 per cent is also, I think, some of it. I do not know whether this has been investigated fully or not. It is very hard to identify the cost of some things.

For example, the special ed programs have come on stream. During the period when they were being brought in, there was money granted for them, and this year it has been rolled into the main grant. It is the same amount of money inflated for inflation. Those programs are very expensive and I think it may be partially in that area, but the basic grant has not kept up with inflation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: By the way, what is your opinion of that matter of the special ed grants and the trainable retarded grants now being rolled in?

Mr Agnew: Now being bundled? I have no problem with it. They are still there. I think the general population has trouble. The grant regulations are a very difficult document, and I think one of the things that could be done is that there could be more information for people on a regional basis on what the grant regs mean. You get the grant regs and you get your board's weighting factors and it is not till months later that you get comparative weighting factors and information from other boards. It is difficult to work through.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The need for simplification of the system is just crucial if we are going to have any accountability. There is no doubt about that.

Mr Villeneuve: Would you comment on the Ministry of Education decree that there would be a certain pupil-teacher ratio? There was some commensurate funding with that. Could you suggest to us what that has done to your particular board? Is that putting you in an even worse situation?

Mr Agnew: I think the members of the Sault Ste Marie board breathed a sigh of relief when they saw they were going to get the incentive, even though they were close to being there, because they were afraid they would only get the incentive for the reduction. Actually, their pupil-teacher ratios in K-13 were fairly close to the target and they were pleased to get that incentive, because it simply meant that they could keep it there.

Mr Villeneuve: So it was a positive in your case?

Mr Agnew: It was positive, yes.

Mr Villeneuve: It was not the same all over. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Agnew and Ms Indrevold, for coming here today. We appreciate the frankness of your brief and your straightforward answers to our committee questions.

Mr Agnew: We hope you have some comments about getting transportation to northern Ontario.

The Vice-Chairman: You probably would not want to hear those comments right now, the way some of us are feeling.

Mr Villeneuve: They are not fit for Hansard.

The Vice-Chairman: Our next deputation is the Association franco-ontarienne des Conseils d'écoles catholiques. We have, I believe, Madame Léger and Madame Beauchamp. Welcome, ladies.

For the purposes of Hansard, please introduce yourselves. We have, once again, set aside 30 minutes for your presentation and for questions. We are on translation, so if you wish to speak in either of this country's official languages, that is fine. Begin whenever you are ready.

1600

ASSOCIATION FRANCO-ONTARIENNE DES CONSEILS D'ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES

Mme Léger : Je suis Fleurette Léger d'Oshawa, vice-présidente de l'Association franco-ontarienne des Conseils d'écoles catholiques, et Liliane Beauchamp est la secrétaire générale de l'AFOCEC.

Fondée le 4 août 1988 et incorporée le 16 novembre 1988, l'AFOCEC représente 20 conseils d'écoles séparées catholiques de l'Ontario et une population étudiante d'environ 30,500 élèves.

L'AFOCEC a pour but d'aider les conseillers, les administrateurs, le personnel enseignant et le personnel d'appui à bien gérer les écoles catholiques de langue française relevant de leur compétence, afin d'assurer l'éducation intégrale de la population catholique de langue française, et de faciliter la collaboration avec les organismes qui poursuivent des buts analogues.

L'AFOCEC présente aujourd'hui sa position sur le financement des écoles élémentaires et secondaires catholiques en Ontario. Elle désire exprimer son appréciation aux membres du Comité spécial de l'éducation pour la considéra-

tion que ces derniers et les autres membres de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario accorderont aux commentaires et aux recommandations portés à leur attention.

Quand le gouvernement de l'Ontario donnera suite par législation à ses déclarations du 18 mai dernier, on pourra enfin parler d'équité et de justice : chaque enfant de cette province aura droit à l'égalité des chances qu'il fréquente une école du système public ou une école du système catholique.

L'histoire des écoles séparées catholiques de l'Ontario démontre sans aucun doute qu'une réforme majeure du financement de l'éducation dans la province de l'Ontario s'impose. Le rapport de la Commission Macdonald indique clairement que :

« Lors de notre examen de l'éventail des possibilités de financement de l'éducation, nous nous sommes laissé guider par un idéal, l'égalité des chances en éducation, et particulièrement par le concept d'un système d'éducation accessible à tous et dont tous les résidents ontariens admissibles pourraient se prévaloir, sans avoir à payer de frais directs. Notre tâche consiste donc à trouver le plus juste équilibre possible entre le gouvernement provincial et les conseils scolaires et, au bout du compte – cela va de soi – la répartition la plus équitable qui soit du fardeau fiscal entre les contribuables ontariens ».

La commission attaque d'une façon particulière le redressement à faire quant à l'obtention, pour les écoles catholiques, de l'accès aux revenus des impôts sur l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle. Cette commission recommande que « tous les impôts perçus sur l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle soient consolidés et répartis entre les conseils publics et séparés, dans la même proportion que forment entre elles les évaluations résidentielles et agricoles de leurs conseils respectifs ».

Le rapport Macdonald identifie clairement la raison d'être de ses recommandations 19, 20, 21 et 22 :

« La répartition de l'évaluation foncière des industries et des commerces ne se limite pas au partage entre les conseils d'écoles publiques et séparées. Il s'agit plutôt d'un partage entre les conseils scolaires les plus avantagés et ceux qui sont le moins favorisés sur le plan de l'assiette fiscale. Les restrictions s'appliquant au prélèvement d'impôts fonciers commerciaux et industriels par les conseils d'écoles séparées représentent, avec la répartition géographique inégale des entreprises, l'une des causes principales des disparités financières ».

Malgré la démarche historique en faveur d'une égalité des chances à l'éducation pour les élèves catholiques, et malgré l'appui du rapport Macdonald à ce qui semble la dernière entrave à l'équité dans le domaine du financement des écoles catholiques, il reste en ce moment d'autres inégalités criantes et difficiles dans le domaine du financement des écoles à travers la province.

Cette injustice causée aux élèves catholiques par le traitement financier inégal accordé et perpétué par le gouvernement provincial est illustrée clairement dans une lettre adressée au ministre de l'Éducation, l'honorable Chris Ward, en date du 30 septembre 1988 par le Conseil catholique de Kirkland Lake, alors qu'il appuie la revendication d'un autre conseil catholique, et je cite :

« Exprimé tout simplement, monsieur le Ministre, il y a quelque chose de fondamentalement inéquitable dans un système de financement qui limite le Conseil catholique de Durham à dépenser 2723 \$ par élève à l'élémentaire, alors que le conseil de l'éducation de la même localité peut dépenser 3328 \$ par élève et le conseil de l'éducation d'Ottawa, 4444 \$ par élève. Le ministre peut-il expliquer comment l'égalité des chances à l'éducation est accessible à un élève catholique de Durham quand le conseil catholique peut dépenser beaucoup moins pour son éducation qu'un élève qui fréquente une école publique de Durham ».

La lettre continue en comparant les dépenses de 1987 : 3430 \$ par élève des écoles catholiques et 4009 \$ par élève des écoles publiques, pour une différence de 16,9 pour cent entre les conseils catholiques et publics de Kirkland Lake. De plus, les contribuables catholiques doivent payer un taux de taxe au palier élémentaire de 28 pour cent plus élevé que les contribuables du secteur public.

La lettre conclut comme suit : « Monsieur le ministre, il existe quelque chose d'injuste dans un système financier éducationnel quand les conseils scolaires qui dépensent le plus sont tous des conseils scolaires publics. »

Présentement, les conseils catholiques éduquent en moyenne 30 pour cent des étudiants et reçoivent 25 pour cent de l'évaluation résidentielle agricole et seulement de 5 à 7 pour cent de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle. Il est évident que le nouveau partage proposé est un début vers l'équité, mais le financement de l'éducation en Ontario est beaucoup plus complexe que ces concepts nous l'indiquent.

Les tableaux des pages suivantes nous indiquent la comparaison des ressources entre deux

conseils de la même ville, les revenus au plafond des dépenses approuvées entre un conseil catholique et un conseil d'éducation, à la page 4, et les dépenses au-dessus des plafonds. La différence finale est de 490 \$ par élève ou 14 700 \$ par classe.

Quand les dépenses d'un conseil d'écoles séparées sont supérieures au plafond des subventions, les conséquences pour certains conseils sont inévitablement la hausse des taxes et la possibilité de perdre des contribuables. Ces inégalités s'expliquent par le fait que les dépenses en sus du plafond des subventions sont financées entièrement à partir d'impôts prélevés dans la localité en fonction de l'évaluation des propriétés résidentielles, commerciales et industrielles désignées pour un conseil.

En Ontario, toutes les évaluations sont désignées pour les conseils des écoles publiques, sauf dans les cas où les contribuables catholiques choisissent de verser leurs impôts au système des écoles séparées. Par conséquent, l'évaluation attribuée aux écoles publiques est beaucoup plus élevée que celle des écoles séparées. Le tableau à la page 5 indique la différence des cotisations entre les deux conseils de Michipicoten. Et je passe à la page suivante.

En d'autres mots, si les dépenses du conseil des écoles séparées en sus du plafond se situent au même niveau que le conseil des écoles publiques, les contribuables catholiques ont un lourd fardeau financier à porter. Par exemple, en 1987, si le conseil catholique de Michipicoten avait dépensé autant que le conseil des écoles publiques, soit 4128 \$ par élève, le taux du millième séparé aurait augmenté de 155 pour cent. Un contribuable du système des écoles séparées qui possède une demeure évaluée à 50 000 \$ aurait versé 522 \$ en impôts au palier élémentaire, tandis que le contribuable des écoles publiques qui possède lui aussi une maison évaluée à 50 000 \$ n'aurait versé que 219 \$ au titre des mêmes dépenses par élève.

Afin d'éviter ce fardeau pour le contribuable, le conseil catholique a dépensé légèrement moins que le plafond des subventions et a donc pu fixer un taux au mille légèrement inférieur à celui du conseil des écoles publiques.

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La situation ci-dessus influence tous les conseils des écoles séparées de la même façon, mais non dans la même mesure. Les grands conseils qui peuvent réaliser des économies d'échelle et qui disposent d'une évaluation beaucoup plus élevée en raison de leur contexte urbain sont moins défavorisés que les conseils

plus modestes du Nord de la province. Le ministère de l'Éducation tient compte de ces écarts en accordant des facteurs de pondération pour le calcul des subventions, afin que ces conseils plus pauvres puissent assurer une éducation de qualité.

Une très grande inégalité existe dans le financement de l'éducation en Ontario. Une faiblesse de la Loi sur l'éducation défavorise surtout les conseils d'écoles catholiques et, en particulier, les petits conseils de la province.

Comme c'est dans les centres urbains que se trouvent en très grande partie les industries et les commerces, ainsi que les plus grandes concentrations de résidences, il en résulte que les revenus provenant de l'évaluation de ces propriétés parviennent aux conseils scolaires qui y sont situés et qui les desservent. Donc, les centres urbains en général abritent les plus grands conseils scolaires, qui du même coup ont une moyenne d'évaluation par classe plus élevée que celle des conseils situés dans les centres ruraux.

Les conseils catholiques, tant urbains que ruraux, qui n'ont aucunement ou peu accès aux revenus provenant d'évaluation de propriétés industrielles et commerciales sont nettement défavorisés et doivent réduire les dépenses qu'ils pourraient ou devraient effectuer au-delà des limites imposées par la province.

Le tableau à la page 7 fait la comparaison sur la base de l'évaluation et du revenu entre un élève du conseil des écoles catholiques de Bruce-Grey et un élève des conseils publics voisins.

Le tableau à la page 8 fait la comparaison des inscriptions et des revenus locaux et le revenu de l'évaluation locale.

Pour chaque dollar de l'impôt commercial prélevé par le Conseil catholique de Lincoln, le Conseil public de Lincoln peut en prélever 15 tout en ayant le même taux de taxe.

Tout catholique qui désire appuyer un conseil catholique doit donner un avis à cet effet et cet avis doit être renouvelé à chaque fois qu'il change de résidence. Si un tel avis n'est pas donné, le contribuable sera présumé vouloir appuyer le conseil public. Cependant, ces mesures administratives ne s'appliquent pas dans le sens inverse. Les contribuables francophones catholiques qui désirent appuyer l'éducation catholique en langue française sont doublement désavantagés par cette procédure de « default public ». Les paragraphes 277n (3), (4) et (5) établissent pour les conseils scolaires une méthode de répartition des revenus entre les deux sections linguistiques pour les domaines qui relèvent de leur compétence exclusive. Lorsque

les recettes à une section linguistique ne suffisent pas, l'alinéa 277 o) s'applique.

L'application de ce mécanisme de financement présente des problèmes insurmontables à la minorité linguistique dans la majorité des conseils catholiques. Des modifications s'imposent, afin de pouvoir offrir une qualité égale à tous les étudiants d'un même conseil catholique.

Les élèves catholiques sont désavantagés financièrement, puisqu'ils n'ont pas droit à un part équitable du revenu local, et plus particulièrement du revenu de l'impôt commercial et industriel.

Pourtant, tous les résidents d'une localité appuient financièrement par leur travail et leurs deniers les entreprises commerciales et les industries locales et contribuent ainsi à les faire prospérer en augmentant leurs revenus.

Tous les consommateurs achètent les produits de ces compagnies; donc, tous les élèves devraient pouvoir bénéficier également de cette prospérité locale.

Malgré les revenus nettement inférieurs à ceux des conseils publics, la plupart des conseils catholiques ont réussi dans le passé à limiter leurs dépenses comparativement aux conseils de l'éducation. Ce tour de force a été possible grâce à une proportion maître-élèves plus élevée, à un plus grand nombre d'élèves par classe et à un choix plus judicieux de programmes moins coûteux offerts dans les écoles catholiques.

Avec l'avènement du parachèvement, tout ceci s'est transformé. Les exigences des ententes collectives, l'application de la loi 30 et le paiement de frais de scolarité aux conseils de l'éducation pour les étudiants catholiques qui fréquentent leurs écoles secondaires, ont obligé les conseils catholiques à dépenser davantage. S'il advenait que le taux d'imposition pour fin d'éducation catholique soit plus élevé que celui de l'école publique, le risque serait très grand de voir diminuer la base d'évaluation catholique déjà restreinte. Les contribuables peuvent changer leur appui et, par le fait même, diminuer la base d'évaluation attribuée aux conseils catholiques.

Un plus grand pourcentage des contribuables sont à la retraite et reçoivent une pension non indexée.

Les familles à faible revenu peuvent difficilement payer plus d'impôts scolaires.

Actuellement, la loi ne permet pas à un couple de mariage mixte de partager ses taxes entre les deux systèmes.

Les tableaux 1 et 2 en annexe, que vous trouverez en dernière page, indiquent une aug-

mentation du taux égalisé d'impôt foncier pour plusieurs conseils catholiques de la province en 1989.

Quoique plusieurs conseils ont fait face à une augmentation substantielle pour la première fois dans leur histoire, cette situation se continuera à moins que le gouvernement augmente sa contribution provinciale annuellement, alloue des subventions supplémentaires pour faire face aux nouvelles initiatives prescrites par les lois et les règlements et élève le plafond des subventions.

Les modifications majeures au Règlement sur les subventions générales de 1989, et le financement de certains programmes sans consultation ou pré-avis aux conseils scolaires, ont obligé plusieurs conseils catholiques à réduire et couper des programmes prioritaires et ont eu un impact négatif sur plusieurs autres conseils catholiques.

L'illustration suivante démontre la contribution provinciale décroissante aux dépenses des conseils scolaires de la province. En 1989, la contribution provinciale décroît davantage. Les conseils scolaires se voient donc dans l'obligation de faire payer par les contribuables locaux les dépenses faites au-dessus des plafonds approuvés. Si les conseils de l'éducation affichent leur désarroi, alors qu'ils ont accès selon leur privilège à trois et quatre fois plus de revenus tirés des impôts commerciaux et industriels que les conseils catholiques, que dire de l'état de crise dans lequel les conseils catholiques se voient soudainement plongés.

L'AFOCEC se réjouit de l'annonce du ministre de l'Éducation, le 18 mai dernier, signalant l'intention du gouvernement de l'Ontario d'introduire un projet de loi visant la justice et l'équité dans la répartition des impôts commerciaux et industriels entre les deux systèmes scolaires.

Le partage, avec le conseil scolaire limitrophe, des recettes du téléphone et du télégraphe, ainsi que les impôts scolaires payés par les corporations dont les actions sont émises sur la base de l'évaluation des propriétés résidentielles et agricoles, est aussi un signe très positif. Enfin, le fait que les actionnaires catholiques dans une compagnie en nom collectif pourront désigner les impôts scolaires proportionnellement à leur part dans la compagnie redressera les inégalités qui se sont perpétuées depuis trop longtemps.

Plusieurs articles des lois existantes devront être amendés de façon réaliste et pratique, afin de refléter les changements proposés et de pouvoir se justifier aux termes de l'article 1 de la Charte des droits et libertés. De plus, les règlements et procédures utilisés pour la mise en oeuvre de

cettenouvelle législation par les différents ministères doivent bien informer les contribuables catholiques de toutes les options au départ. Les conseils scolaires doivent avoir accès aux données du recensement et de l'évaluation résidentielle et commerciale.

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Le gouvernement de la province propose d'accorder aux conseils scolaires, sous forme de législation permissive, le droit de prélever des impôts additionnels pour financer leurs besoins en capitaux (construction d'écoles, rajouts, rénovations, achat d'équipement) dans les juridictions à croissance rapide. Alors que la possibilité d'accumuler des réserves pour dépenses capitales par cet impôt de lotissement peut paraître avantageuse, ce nouveau mécanisme de financement peut entraîner des répercussions fort néfastes. Les conseils en croissance rapide, la plupart étant de grands centres urbains, pourront avoir recours à ce nouveau mode de financement. L'accès à l'impôt de lotissement par les conseils scolaires amènera comme conséquence une réduction de la contribution provinciale aux fins de dépenses capitales de 75 à 60 pour cent. Les conseils qui n'opteront pas pour l'impôt de lotissement ne doivent pas être pénalisés.

Nous recommandons que le gouvernement de l'Ontario enchâsse dans une loi, dès l'automne 1989, les initiatives annoncées le 18 mai dernier.

Attendu que des améliorations importantes sont annoncées relativement à un partage plus équitable avec les conseils catholiques des revenus générés par l'impôt commercial et industriel;

Attendu que les conseils catholiques ont été privés, historiquement et injustement depuis très longtemps, de ces sources de revenus dont jouissent les conseils publics limitrophes;

Attendu que des retards très sérieux ont été imposés aux conseils catholiques à cause du manque de ressources adéquates comparativement à celles des conseils publics;

Qu'il soit accepté que, durant une période de dix ans, le gouvernement de l'Ontario puisse accorder des subventions de démarrage et de rattrapage aux conseils catholiques, pour leur permettre d'égaliser les chances à l'éducation pour les élèves catholiques, et de rendre ainsi justice aux contribuables catholiques.

Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario oblige les municipalités à partager équitablement avec les conseils scolaires limitrophes tous les paiements tenant lieu d'impôt.

Que les articles des lois existantes soient amendés en tenant compte des préoccupations

exprimées dans ce mémoire et des recommandations soumises.

Que les conseils catholiques partagent exactement le même territoire que le conseil public limitrophe.

Que le ministère de l'Éducation intervienne auprès des ministères du Revenu et de la Consommation et du Commerce, afin de modifier le formulaire 1 de déclaration pour désigner l'appui au système scolaire catholique au moment de l'achat ou du transfert d'une propriété.

Que le gouvernement maintienne sa contribution de 75 pour cent aux conseils catholiques qui ne choisissent pas l'accès à l'impôt de lotissement.

Que la loi soit amendée afin de permettre à un couple de mariage mixte de partager ses taxes entre les deux systèmes.

Que les décisions de modifier le Règlement sur les subventions générales ou de retirer le financement de certains programmes soient prises en consultation avec les conseils catholiques.

Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario prenne les mesures nécessaires en vue de porter sa contribution provinciale à 60 pour cent.

Que le ministère de l'Éducation remette les subventions aux conseils scolaires en effectuant douze versements mensuels égaux avec une retenue de 7 pour cent au douzième versement.

Que le plan de subvention des dépenses capitales soit révisé annuellement par le ministère, afin de refléter les coûts réels et de permettre : la construction de nouvelles places-élèves; la rénovation et l'aménagement d'écoles transférées d'un autre conseil; la construction de locaux qui permettront d'offrir de meilleurs programmes dans les petites écoles et les plus petits conseils; des rénovations aux écoles plus vieilles afin qu'elles puissent offrir des programmes complets; des rénovations nécessaires à la transformation d'écoles élémentaires en écoles secondaires; l'achat d'équipement spécialisé; et l'embauche de personnel spécialisé pour l'enfance exceptionnelle.

Que des subventions adéquates soient accordées aux conseils pour la mise en œuvre et le maintien des initiatives prescrites par le gouvernement, telles que : les projets des conseils qui veulent faire la mise en œuvre de certaines initiatives ministérielles; les programmes de formation du personnel responsable de la mise en œuvre de ces mêmes initiatives; les services de supervision dans les petits conseils, qui sont présentement assurés et financés à 100 pour cent par le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario;

l'équité d'emploi ; l'équité salariale ; la santé et la sécurité au travail ; la taxe fédérale sur les achats et les services ; la réduction du nombre d'élèves par classe ; l'impôt-santé, et j'en passe.

Enfin, ce qui nous tient beaucoup à coeur, que la Loi sur l'éducation soit modifiée, de façon à permettre une plus grande autonomie financière aux sections linguistiques d'un conseil catholique.

Les principes fondamentaux sur lesquels reposent une refonte du système ontarien de financement en matière d'éducation demeurent l'équité et la justice. Les exemples et les constatations soulignées dans ce mémoire démontrent que les législateurs doivent tenir compte des questions d'équité, de capacité dans toutes les réformes proposées, puisque les conseillers scolaires ont la responsabilité de la mise en oeuvre et la responsabilité de répondre aux attentes des contribuables catholiques partout dans la province.

L'AFOCEC demande aux membres de ce comité de faire tout en leur pouvoir afin d'assurer que la nouvelle législation soit adoptée rapidement et que la mise en oeuvre débute le 1^{er} janvier 1990 comme prévu.

Merci. J'ai à mes côtés la secrétaire générale, qui a fait les recherches pour ce mémoire. Alors, elle est mandatée pour répondre aux questions, s'il y a lieu.

The Vice-Chairman : Thank you very much. It is a very comprehensive brief and I do have questions. Mrs O'Neill first.

Mrs O'Neill : I would like to go back to page 2, if I may. The whole tenure of that page is somewhat confusing to me; maybe it is the translation, in that there seems to be a conception "allowed to spend." I do not really know what you mean by that, in that it is a decision of the board how far it can go beyond the grant ceiling, and I do know that there are many factors that make boards make decisions. As I say, maybe it was just that I was not fully getting what was said on that page, but there seems to be a feeling that there is an imposition of how much a separate school board can spend, which is much less than the imposed idea of how much a public school board can spend. I am not sure I am getting the right message.

Mme Beauchamp : Bien, c'est toute la question ici des plafonds qui entre en jeu. C'est du conseil de Kirkland Lake dont il est question ici, comme on vient de vous le dire. Si ce conseil dépense le même montant par élève que le conseil de l'éducation catholique de Durham, c'est sûr qu'il serait obligé d'augmenter ses taxes

à 16,9 pour cent ; il y aurait une augmentation beaucoup plus considérable.

La décision de dépasser les plafonds incombe, bien sûr, au conseil scolaire. Mais vous savez bien que si vous vous demandez aux contribuables de fournir la différence, dans une situation comme celle de Kirkland Lake, où l'assiette fiscale, la base d'évaluation, est très faible, le conseil va recevoir très peu. Par contre, à Durham, l'assiette fiscale rapporterait beaucoup plus au conseil scolaire.

Mrs O'Neill : Okay, I got that. On page 14, it says, "retirer le financement de certains programmes." I am wondering if you can give me some examples.

Mme Beauchamp : Oui. Il y a eu la question des programmes d'enrichissement d'été. Des cours d'été ont été retirés à la dernière minute dans certains conseils scolaires qui avaient déjà fait des dépenses en vue d'embaucher du personnel supplémentaire, d'organiser et d'annoncer ces cours – et le ministère a décidé à la dernière minute de retirer le financement.

Les conseils scolaires ont également fait des revendications auprès du ministère, afin qu'ils puissent, au moins cette année, continuer leur programmes et les retirer graduellement si nécessaire. Mais il faut dire également que ces programmes d'enrichissement, surtout dans les écoles de langue française, sont très importants pour la récupération des jeunes, au point de vue qualité du français parlé – avant même d'arriver dans la salle de classe. Il y a eu le retrait de certains programmes, qui a vivement fâché les parents des élèves. En effet, le conseil scolaire avait déjà annoncé ces programmes, sans savoir que le gouvernement allait retirer le financement. C'est là seulement un exemple.

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Mme O'Neill : Merci.

M. R. F. Johnston : Merci pour le mémoire. C'est plein de chiffres; on peut inonder même un comptable avec ces chiffres-là. Mais pour moi, c'est fort intéressant. Cela nous aidera beaucoup, à l'avenir, quand nous voudrions avoir des exemples des différences qui existent dans la province.

Mais de temps en temps, dans nos réunions, nous avons peut-être laissé tomber une vue d'ensemble des problèmes financiers. On considère peut-être le projet de loi 30 et la possibilité d'avoir un équilibre entre les deux systèmes comme une sorte de piège pour effectuer de petits changements dans notre système. On regarde la répartition, par exemple, des fonds commerciaux

et industriels comme la vraie réponse aux grands problèmes financiers et de comptabilité pour les programmes éducatifs.

Je pense qu'il est intéressant que tous les groupes, et même le vôtre, se concentrent sur une idée de M. Macdonald concernant la répartition, mais pas sur la deuxième grande idée qu'il nous a donnée : c'est l'idée d'une nouvelle taxe, d'un impôt personnel pour l'éducation ; de moins d'argent versé à même les taxes municipales ; et de repenser les responsabilités locales et provinciales sur le financement de l'éducation. J'aimerais avoir votre avis concernant ces idées et cet autre principe d'équité dont il a parlé.

Mme Léger : Je dois vous dire au départ que la commission Macdonald avait fait un rapport assez volumineux et assez intéressant. Ce qui est regrettable, c'est qu'on n'a pas mis en oeuvre les recommandations du rapport Macdonald quand on a mis en place la Loi 30. Pour plusieurs, pour les conseils des écoles catholiques, ça a été une déception, parce qu'avec ce parachèvement, nous n'avons vraiment pas eu le financement qui s'imposait.

C'est peut-être pour cette raison que vous constatez, dans les projections budgétaires à la fin du mémoire, une augmentation substantielle des frais. Vous savez aussi qu'il n'y avait aucun contrôle sur les frais de scolarité payés pour les élèves catholiques étudiant dans les écoles publiques. Alors, à ce moment-là, ça a créé des difficultés. Quand vous me parlez de la question de l'impôt, qui est une autre recommandation de la Commission Macdonald, il est sûr qu'elle aurait peut-être pu retenir notre attention.

Cependant, vous connaissez la réalité d'aujourd'hui, quand on parle aux gens de payer plus d'impôts; vous connaissez tout le débat qui se situe au niveau de la taxe fédérale actuellement — Quand on propose aux gens de déplacer un prélèvement pour le percevoir sous une autre forme, les contribuables, et vous le savez comme politiciens, se méfient toujours, parce qu'ils s'imaginent que vous allez ajouter une autre taxe. C'est pour ça que notre association n'a pas choisi cette solution, peut-être pour des raisons politiques et pour ne pas décevoir les contribuables. Comme nous avons une responsabilité en tant que conseillers scolaires — les conseillers scolaires ont une responsabilité vis-à-vis des contribuables catholiques et de leurs attentes — nous n'avons pas voulu leur imposer une autre taxe.

M. R. F. Johnston : Pour nous, c'est plus difficile, parce que c'est une nouvelle taxe provinciale dont il a parlé. Il a pensé à un système avec répartition de 80 pour cent de la part de la

province et de 20 pour cent de la part des municipalités.

A mon avis, la révolte des impôts qui s'en vient, c'est une révolte basée sur l'inéquité des impôts pour l'éducation et des impôts sur les propriétés, qui partout sont trop élevés maintenant. A mon avis, il faut examiner des exemples des autres provinces ou de la province de Québec : cette province paie plus de 90 pour cent des frais ; la Colombie-Britannique, plus de 80 pour cent. Il existe d'autres exemples sur la façon de financer et d'obtenir l'équité dans la province ; à mon avis, il faut regarder plus loin que la simple répartition des taxes industrielles et commerciales.

Mme Beauchamp : Je ne dis pas pour autant que nous rejetons cette recommandation de la Commission Macdonald, mais je dis que notre association, pour quelque raison, n'a pas étudié cette question-là. Il faut aussi considérer le cas des contribuables qui n'ont plus d'enfants dans les écoles. Tout cela rend le problème très complexe.

M. R. F. Johnston : Je peux le comprendre, mais je suis un peu déçu. Merci.

M. Villeneuve : Merci infiniment pour votre présentation, qui nous donne des exemples concrets de l'inéquité qui existe actuellement, même après la consolidation de la taxe industrielle et commerciale. Vous nous faites de bonnes recommandations, mais vos exemples sont particulièrement bons du fait que vous vous servez d'exemples locaux; et puis, comme l'impôt foncier ne règlera absolument rien ici, il va probablement falloir aller de l'autre côté — Vous avez déjà des immeubles qui ont probablement besoin de dépenses en capital.

Il est également intéressant que vous ayez illustré comment les retranchements ont été faits au sein du système scolaire catholique de façon à dépenser un minimum des fonds disponibles, tout en maintenant les impôts plus ou moins égaux. Le conseil scolaire de Cochrane nous a expliqué, un peu plus tôt, le grave problème auquel ils ont eu à faire face avec une augmentation considérable, supérieure à celle du système public — vraiment, on perd des joueurs — inévitablement.

Du côté recensement, nous avons eu des problèmes assez importants, chez nous à Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry. Nous avons un système qui est très difficile à administrer, en ce sens que nous avons des conseillers qui ont deux voix, et ça rend les choses très difficiles. En ce qui vous concerne, pourriez-vous nous faire quelques commentaires que nous pourrions

transmettre au ministère du Revenu, pour essayer d'éviter les problèmes qui se ont surgi à cause de la hâte avec laquelle on a présenté le mode de recensement, la dernière fois.

Mme Beauchamp : Il est évident que le problème du recensement a été un problème majeur, et pour notre association en particulier, puisque nous représentons trois conseils qui sont sous la double ordonnance, c'est-à-dire l'ordonnance de la double majorité –

M. Villeneuve : Vous avez la même chose –

Mme Beauchamp : Je connais très bien la situation. Ce qu'on reproche surtout au gouvernement – et dans un cas comme celui de Sudbury, où il y a eu un renversement complet, où il y avait une proportion de huit conseillers scolaires francophones et de six conseillers scolaires anglophones, et où la situation est renversée, avec maintenant dix conseillers scolaires anglophones pour six conseillers scolaires francophones; c'est une situation assez difficile, pour pas dire autre chose. Et ça alourdit les procédures, bien sûr; le président du conseil est ici et je suis certaine qu'il va vous en parler.

De toute façon, on avait prévenu le gouvernement avant le recensement, et on l'avait prévenu pendant le recensement – parce qu'il existe ici, dans la ville de Sudbury et dans la région, des édifices complets, par exemple, le Manoir des pionniers, les Pères Jésuites, etc. qui ont tous été identifiés comme appartenant au secteur anglophone public, quand ils appartiennent à 90 pour cent au secteur francophone catholique. Donc, il y a eu des évidences capitales – et, en tant qu'association, il nous serait possible de créer un dossier qui pourrait certainement vous apeurer sur toute la question du recensement.

Nous traitons de ce problème à la page 8, section 9, et il existe certainement des correctifs que le ministère du Revenu devrait faire dès maintenant. Notre plus grande inquiétude, en tant qu'association provinciale, c'est que le temps passe vite. Il s'est déjà écoulé un an depuis le dernier recensement et les négociations avec le gouvernement vont très lentement pour ce qui est d'apporter des correctifs. Nous avons peur de nous retrouver avec la même situation lors du prochain recensement.

M. R. F. Johnston : C'est toute une histoire.

Mme Beauchamp : C'est pour cette raison qu'on voudrait bien que vous fassiez des pressions politiques en tant que législateurs pour apporter des correctifs à cette fameuse question du recensement. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous expliquer la question des « ayant droit » et des

« non ayant droit » et du fait qu'on doit s'identifier comme contribuables catholiques à l'achat d'une propriété, sinon nos propriétés sont automatiquement identifiées avec le secteur public anglophone.

M. Villeneuve : Il en est de même avec les mariages mixtes.

Mme Beauchamp : C'est ça. Alors, on aborde ce problème dans une de nos recommandations.

M. Villeneuve : Ma dernière question : à la page 14, numéro 10, j'aurais aimé voir à peu près trois mots additionnels ici : « 60 pour cent des dépenses totales » et non « des dépenses supposément approuvées ». Seriez-vous d'accord avec ça ?

Mme Léger : Je pense que je serais entièrement d'accord.

M. R. F. Johnston : Je suis étonné.

M. Villeneuve : Merci infiniment.

Mme Beauchamp : Je ne répondrai pas.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs O'Neill): I would like to thank both of you very much for a presentation which you see engendered a lot of discussion. I am sure we could continue if we had unlimited time today.

I call the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board forward. Please introduce yourselves for the purpose of Hansard.

SUDBURY DISTRICT ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Dequanne: My name is Armand Dequanne. I am the chairman of the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. With me is Robert Boucher, the superintendent of business and finance.

I am just wondering, Madam Chairman, in view of the fact that your flight arrived late, if you have a serious commitment for a flight out?

The Acting Chairman: No. I think I can speak for those of us here now. Those of us who are staying will likely be remaining over the supper hour and taking another flight out.

Mr Villeneuve: We apologize for the two-hour-and-13-minute delay.

Mr Dequanne: It is no problem. We just wanted to be as accommodating as possible to the committee. I will be as brief as I can.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr Dequanne: Our board welcomes and appreciates the opportunity to make a presenta-

tion to the members of the select committee on education.

I note that on 18 May 1989, the Honourable Chris Ward, the then Minister of Education, announced the details of a plan to ensure greater fairness and equity in the distribution of local and provincial education revenues between the Roman Catholic separate school boards and the Ontario public boards of education. Our board supports and believes that every child in Ontario deserves equality of educational opportunity, and that all boards must receive the financial resources to achieve that goal.

We do believe that the issue and the future of educational finance is one which is paramount. The board's initial reaction to the minister's proposal is most favourable, but yet cautious. Time is required to discover if the intent of the changes and its principles do in fact become reality. The board's presentation will address various education finance issues as they relate to equity, adequacy of operating and capital finances and, finally, accountability. We are optimistic that the contents of this brief will be received as further evidence that the government must move expeditiously to ensure that the announcement regarding the coterminous sharing of commercial and industrial assessment as well as other related changes are enshrined in legislation which is both workable and just for all students in this province.

In dealing with equity, as indicated by the honourable minister, it is only after careful consideration was given to the significant public input provided in the Macdonald commission, as well as the considerable consultation with the Completion Office Separate Schools and the Ontario Public Education Network that the Ministry of Education and this government arrived at a conclusion. This decision, one which we strongly support and applaud the government for having taken, accentuates that it would be appropriate and just that both of our province's publicly funded school systems have a fair right of access to local assessment revenues. These actions are further indications of the government's intention to redress long-lasting inequities and its desire to provide a fair share of available local resources to the children in the two systems.

However, we must point out that as it currently operates, there is little equity in the financing of education. In the last two decades, every task force, commission, select committee or inter-ministerial work group that has examined the financial architecture in support of elementary

and secondary education in Ontario has recognized that there are fundamental flaws in the structure. I cite Ontario Committee on Taxation, 1967; Mayo, 1976; Jackson, 1978; advisory committee, 1984, and the Macdonald commission, 1985.

The unequal access by boards to the total assessment base is perhaps the most glaring massive inequality. Assessment tends to be concentrated in urban areas, so that by and large urban boards tend to be rich in assessment and rural boards poor in assessment.

The Education Act, section 126, makes it very difficult for a corporation or a partnership to support separate schools. Commercial-industrial assessment is concentrated in the hands of urban boards of education, assessment rich, and largely denied to Catholic as well as to rural boards, assessment poor.

The following table describes the impact of this disparity in terms of the Sudbury Board of Education and the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. It provides comparative data on the per pupil cost of education, elementary and secondary. The figures speak for themselves. They indicate an additional expenditure per pupil of \$438 at the elementary level and \$1,068 at the secondary level, as well as an additional over-ceiling expenditure of \$353 at the elementary and \$878 at the secondary level.

Effectively, because of the inequitable assessment distribution, the board of education is able to spend an additional \$353 or 50 per cent more over ceiling per elementary pupil than our board, and \$878 or 110 per cent more over ceiling per secondary pupil.

If the Sudbury Roman Catholic board had access to per pupil revenues equal to the per pupil expenditure level of the Sudbury board, some \$4.9 million in additional moneys would have been available for Catholic elementary schools and some \$5.2 million for Catholic secondary pupils. That represents a combined total revenue advantage of \$10.1 million to the board of education.

One must remember that we are governed by the same ministry policies. We are required to meet the same expectations for the provisions of program and services, we compete in the same salary market for teaching and support staff, and we are subjected to the same level of public expectations for success as our public school counterparts. We wish to emphasize also that our ratepayers contribute through their work, their purchases and their shareholdings to the wealth

and success of industry throughout the region and are entitled to share in the proceeds from the taxation of this revenue source.

All we ask for is a level playing field. The proposed changes begin to address some of these inequities.

We have listed a total of 14 recommendations, the first recommendation being:

1. This board strongly recommends to the select committee to support every effort made to pass the proposed legislation on the sharing of local educational revenues for 1 January 1990.

In dealing with adequacy, the ceilings established by the province are too low, and almost all boards in the province have to spend beyond the ceiling to provide the services required by their constituents. When expenditures go beyond the ceilings, assessment-rich boards have an obvious advantage. They enjoy a disproportionately large assessment base from commerce and industry, which is almost automatically directed to public boards by law. Assessment-rich boards will often obtain as much as two to 22 times as much revenue from one mill as the assessment-poor boards. Such a disparity is indefensible and negates the very basic principle of the mill rate concept grant plan, ie, equal educational opportunity for equal mill rate burden. Unfortunately, the degree of educational opportunity available to a student has come to depend on the accidents of geographical location and/or the system chosen by the parents for the child.

Due to the inherent present inequities regarding the access to local assessment, the Sudbury Catholic board suffers greatly from an inadequacy of revenues.

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In Sudbury, assessment is distributed as follows between the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Sudbury Board of Education: residential equalized assessment, 51 versus 48 per cent; commercial equalized assessment, 15 versus 84 per cent; and in total, 32 for the separate school board versus 67 for the public board.

These are very important figures because in this distribution they result in the following unjust inequities, as shown in the table on page 6: The difference of one mill of residential raises is \$25,586 or \$5.53 per student; on a commercial base, \$496,521 or \$32.96 per student; and in total, \$470,935 or \$38.49 per pupil.

Based on the commercial and industrial assessment, the Sudbury Board of Education raises almost seven times as much revenue from one mill as we do. On a total residential and

commercial assessment basis, the board of education raises more than two times as much revenue from one mill as our board does. This is almost entirely due to the added advantage that the board of education has with the commercial and industrial assessment.

In summary, the picture of the Sudbury District separate board compared to that of the board of education looks as follows: the number of students, 56 per cent for the Catholic board versus 44 per cent for the public board; equalized residential and commercial equalized assessment, 33 per cent for our board versus 67 per cent for the public board; moneys available per student, \$33.22 versus \$71.71, more than twice as much.

This situation needs to be rectified in the interest of equity for students. The government's proposed sharing of local education revenues will thus greatly assist. However, the following recommendations are made:

2. That the government even go a step further and seriously consider the sharing of industrial-commercial assessment based on the student population rather than on the ratio of residential and farm assessment by municipality;

3. The sharing should include assessment from both commercial and residential property owned by companies within the definition;

4. Parking areas and vacant corporate properties should also be included; and

5. That separate school boards have access to their fair share of federal government payments in lieu of taxes.

In relation to adequacy, or rather the lack thereof, and almost as important as the legislation itself are the procedures used by various ministries with regard to school support and assessment. Roman Catholics must be very clearly made aware of their options. Separate school supporters and boards must have access to ministry information to verify and confirm support. The following recommendations should be considered by the select committee:

6. (a) A full enumeration each year;

(b) Notice of assessment forms should continue to be sent each year where there has been any change in the file and to all multiple-dwelling buildings over seven units;

(c) Boards should have access to the assessment rolls through an on-line computer hookup to the Ontario assessment system database;

(d) The requirement for the designation of school support added to the affidavit of land transfer;

(e) The printouts of school support lists from the regional assessment offices should continue; and

(f) Ratepayers must identify themselves as separate school supporters or public school supporters. If they specifically do not do so and their support is not indicated, then the support code should be left as "u" for unidentified, as opposed to automatically being set and defaulting to public. The value of this unidentified base of assessment should then be shared between the separate and public boards as per the provincial government's suggested method of sharing for commercial-industrial assessments, or, better yet, based on the student population.

The provincial share of total educational costs has declined over the last few years. The local taxpayer is being greatly burdened. The government's intention to raise ceilings and thus shoulder a greater portion of the burden is welcome news as a benefit to almost all boards. Here we also have a recommendation:

7. It should definitely be a goal of the province to raise its share of educational costs from its present mid-40 per cent range to a 60 per cent share of the total educational costs—which will please Mr Villeneuve—and then continue to maintain it. We have eliminated one question.

This board presently and in the near future, in an even more devastating manner, will face serious difficulties with retirement gratuity liabilities for its ageing teaching population. The ministry must come to grips with this situation, which will become impossible to cope with for boards without reserves or adequate assessment.

Table 3 on the next page depicts our board's situation regarding potential retirement gratuity liabilities in the next two decades. Based on the magnitude of these future liabilities, it is therefore recommended to the select committee:

8. That it be compulsory for boards to set up a reserve for retirement gratuity equal to the liability at year-end, and that the expense to provide for this reserve be accepted by the Ministry of Education as a recognized extraordinary expenditure. Payment for gratuity upon retirement would be a charge against the reserve.

Our board has had to contend for a long time, even prior to 1969, with portable accommodation. With Bill 30, this board has been placed in a position of even more serious accommodation deficiencies. Since 1986, St Charles College has grown by approximately 15 per cent. With program expansions and enrolment growth, St Charles College will have 11 portable class-

rooms. At Marymount College there are 19 portables as of September 1989.

It should be pointed out that seven teaching spaces at Marymount College annex are substandard with regard to size. Consequently, at least 43 per cent of our secondary school accommodation will be portable, where many students have to leave a main building during severe winter weather to go to portables. A detailed presentation of this item was made to the Minister of Education as late as this summer.

For the French-language section, the board, in its innovative way, to provide secondary school accommodation has converted an elementary school into a secondary school, as well as having provided for a major addition. The board is grateful to the Ministry of Education for sharing some of these costs. Due to the increased pressure from the Valley East Catholic ratepayers for a Catholic secondary school in their community, the board again approved the conversion of Ecole Saint-Jean into a secondary school. However, there have been no ministry funds forthcoming for this project to date.

The select committee is advised of the following recommendation:

9. That the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board is in dire need of secondary school accommodation. It requires immediate ministry approval and funds for the building of a full English Catholic secondary school, as well as full conversion, in addition, to providing a French Catholic secondary school in the valley. The board would like to impress upon the select committee its dire lack of secondary accommodation and its recommendation that the Ministry of Education, through long-range and effective planning, address the accommodation issue by special means over and above its capital budget forecast.

The select committee should also be made aware that due to the lack of suitable and adequate secondary accommodation, the following figures have been projected for our open access and grandfather students, who, for all intents and purposes, are being forced to be educated in the public school system rather than in a Catholic secondary school of their choice. The 1989 projections for grandfather students numbered 1,216, at a cost of \$1.45 million, whereas the open access students numbered 3,000, at a cost of \$17.3 million: A total of 4,225 students at a total cost of \$18.7 million.

As can be seen from the above statistics, a large number of our student population cannot be given the education of their choice, mostly

because of lack of facilities. This additional information will hopefully assist the select committee in being able to respond to our accommodation requirements and help provide adequate capital funding.

With regard to recent capital funding announcements, our board has serious reservations with the proposed decreased level of funding for new projects, from an average of 75 per cent to 60 per cent, as well as with the proposed decrease in funding for renovations from a board's specific rate of grant to an average of 75 per cent.

As previously described, this board needs to address serious accommodation problems with both new construction and major renovations. Because of the unfavourable assessment position and because of the present insufficient level of provincial revenue, our taxpayer is already overburdened, and now it is being suggested that this same taxpayer must pay an even greater amount of money for accommodation. This is totally unjust and unfair.

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The ministry suggests that through Bill 20 lot levies might be imposed. This could possibly be part of the solution, but our board would apparently not benefit as much from such lot levies. Therefore, the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board respectfully submits the following:

10. That the select committee pay particular attention to our board's capital needs to truly make our system an equitable and adequate one by maintaining ministry capital funding at its present rate of grant for both new projects and renovations.

In general, the select committee also needs to know that the present capital funding plan is totally unrealistic and out of date. The board recommends:

11. That the capital funding plan reflect today's current conditions of construction as well as provide more accurate adjustment of prices due to different geographical locations.

The board would respectfully submit its total disappointment in the ministry's decision to suddenly eliminate all funding for elementary summer enrichment programs. Since 1972 these programs have been serving a large number of our population. They proved to be most beneficial to the students and were also a great source of employment. Our board would like to inform you that last year's enrolment in our summer school enrichment programs totalled 5,597 students and employed more than 419 teachers and assistants. More than 234 courses were offered throughout

our jurisdiction. We would therefore request of the select committee:

12. That the Ministry of Education provide adequate funding to reinstate elementary summer enrichment programs.

Another of the board's problems dealing with adequacy of finances is the one related to the new proposed health payroll tax. Preliminary impact estimates of this tax indicate that it would double the costs of our Ontario health insurance plan premiums and would thus add an additional burden of some \$700,000 to our board in 1990. We are optimistic that given the favourable considered elimination of this tax for hospitals, colleges and universities, the same consideration would be extended to school boards. This board therefore recommends to the select committee:

13. That all efforts be made by the Ministry of Education to eliminate the impact of the new health payroll tax on all school boards.

Accountability: With the present lack of equitable sharing of local education revenues and with the inadequate levels of operating and capital financing, it is becoming increasingly more and more difficult for a local board such as the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board to be and remain fully accountable.

As an assessment-poor board, we have had to exercise very strict stewardship over the resources at our disposal. The Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board has always taken pride in being a leading, efficient and effective educational organization. This board has structured itself in such a way as to meet the challenges of the future and to meet the requirements attendant upon the completion of its system. However, due to its fiscal responsibility, the board has kept a very lean organization administratively. Early warning signs of failure and breakdown might force it to establish additional administrative support positions as well as to develop major maintenance and facility upgrading programs.

We work hard and under great pressure to provide competitive programs, pupil-teacher ratios, salaries and school facilities in a highly competitive education environment. We take some pride in asserting that this board has risen to the challenge posed by the extension of the Catholic school system. We believe that the employees and members of this board have demonstrated responsible accountability.

Our board can continue to do so however only for programs over which it has control. Provincial initiatives such as class size reductions in grades 1 and 2, programs on AIDS, drugs,

co-operative education, mandatory junior kindergarten and full senior kindergartens are only examples of situations which, when announced by the province, created enormous pressures on our board to provide and deliver, once the public is made aware. These, in turn, cause additional strain on any already fragile financial chest and overburdened taxpayer. Yet, we must compete.

Therefore, the board would recommend to the select committee, under its final recommendation:

14. That serious consideration be given by the ministry that for every initiative, the necessary tools and related additional financial support from the province be provided so that adequate realistic programs can be delivered. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education must be prepared to continue to support these programs once they have been instituted. The boards must not be left holding the bag.

All things being equal, our board does want to maintain its autonomy by continuing to be responsible and accountable. It is quite acceptable that the grant plan should contain some checks and balances to ensure cost-effectiveness with equity in the delivery of education.

In conclusion, the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board is hopeful and optimistic that the select committee on education will be attentive and responsive to the many issues raised in this presentation.

Our trustees would like to re-emphasize that we strongly support and encourage the government's initiative with regard to the sharing of local education revenues.

The members of the board thank you for your kind attention and consideration and wish you every success in your deliberations.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much. You did bring forward many issues. I think some of them have been presented to us for the first time by you. Mr Johnston would like to begin the questioning.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, it is true. In fact, it is getting to be surprising, but we are getting new things raised on a regular basis, and we appreciate that. I should tell you that we have the new parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education here. I am sure that he has already noted down your request about the summer enrichment programs; that is probably the first thing he is going to take back to the Minister of Education (Mr Conway) when he finds him. The new superminister now can hide behind any number of ministries, as you know. But I am sure the member for Kingston and The Islands (Mr

Keyes) will be able to find him without too much difficulty. I have made the chair nervous.

Mr Keyes: There are several parliamentary assistants, and we can just juggle them back and forth.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The PAs just can keep meeting among themselves, perhaps. This would be one of the ways of dealing with it.

I also appreciate very much your suggestions around enumeration. The member for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (Mr Villeneuve) and I have been raising these concerns about how that whole process can be improved so we do not have the problem of ratepayers not being identified appropriately, etc, and I appreciate that very much.

However, if I might put it in these terms, I want to deal with the effects on the taxpayer more than the effects on the boards. I understand why boards like your own are coming and saying the things you are saying; that makes sense—that you have to have equity in terms of funding. That makes all the sense in the world to me, but I have been thinking a lot lately, as I think many of us have been, about the taxpayer in all of this. I am wondering if you could tell how much of the local property tax is paid to education here. Do you know what it works out to?

Mr Dequanne: It amounts to approximately 50 per cent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you have any idea what the average property taxpayer is paying these days in the region?

Mr Dequanne: On the average, we would be looking at approximately \$1,200 to \$1,400, 50 per cent of which would go to the school system.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That kind of figure is quite similar to even a place like Toronto. I think you are making the point as well that those kinds of costs are now hitting this region, as they are in some of the more assessment-rich areas.

I guess this raises with me the problem of the concentration on the local tax base, whether it is industrial-commercial, frankly, or right on the local property taxpayer directly, because it all affects the community's ability to pay for education. I guess I want to come back to what I was raising with the last group that was here, the notion that we should maybe be trying to move substantially away from the property tax base as our means of paying for education and, most important, off the individual property tax owner rather than necessarily a commercial system, but in general.

You have mentioned a 60 per cent figure which Jackson and others pulled out of the air for various reasons and it was attained, of course, during the mid-1970s for a brief period of time. I am wondering if we could have some of your thoughts on that whole question, about moving to something more like what Macdonald suggested, for instance, or other changes that might take place to give relief to the property taxpayer who rightfully says these days: "Why should \$700 of my bucks on a yearly basis be going into education off my house? I do not understand why it should go in off my house." He might be a pensioner, a disabled individual, a person who has been laid off from the mines for six months in the past year and that is not taken into account in any progressive way at all in our tax system. Why should his house be paying for so much of that cost of educating somebody else's kid?

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Mr Dequanne: That is one of the issues that is continuously brought down as a comment from our ratepayers, especially those who are retired or have never had children in the school system, be it public or separate. I guess they also have very serious difficulty in paying any taxes for any services that are not being rendered.

As to an alternative, it seems that the system and today's standards are taxing us to death, no matter which way we look at it. If it is not provincial, it is federal. If it is not federal, it is local. If it is not local, it is the school board. Maybe Mr Boucher would have a comment as to an alternative.

Mr Boucher: The present property taxing system is one which at this point in time we feel is inequitable. Perhaps that is the first thing that has to be addressed. The added advantage of going to income tax is that is a more progressive type of system, as opposed to the property tax system. Maybe that is where the provincial government might look in order to raise its ceilings to get to the 60 or 70 per cent level of funding of total costs of education in the province. Certainly I think that particular idea is one where the province would have to become innovative itself, if you want, in attempting to share that load.

I think one of the initial propositions was that property assessment, industrial and commercial, be shared throughout the entire province. We are not there yet. We are only discussing sharing with your coterminous board within municipalities. Maybe the first step should be sharing at least within the jurisdiction of the board and not just necessarily within each municipality.

Second, the most equitable one would probably be throughout the entire province. That in a sense gets more towards the point of income tax as being one of the ways to resolve that. If you are sharing income tax, obviously it comes from every one of our pockets and then is redistributed province-wide. I would tend to say that income tax might help the province to raise its total participation in the cost of education to 60 per cent or more.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have heard, by the way, that the proposed legislation may have the coterminous jurisdiction side of things within it and not the existing anomalies that are there now.

The other option, of course, that we have looked at which we have not, again, heard much discussion about is the notion of having the property tax itself made more progressive through various means of income testing, as it were, to give people tax rebates on it so that seniors or others might get some assistance with that. However that, of course, would play a major and negative role on a community—let us not use Sudbury—such as Sault Ste Marie. If Algoma Steel went down for a long period of time, their capacity to maintain education levels, if that became the way of doing that, would be severely jeopardized.

I did want to raise one other matter which has come up several times. You are not the first to raise this but yours is the first brief I have taken it out on, so I will just apologize for that in advance. It is this notion that the commercial-industrial tax maybe should be split up on a per-student basis rather than on the other premise, which I think is out of line; that is that there is some sort of relationship between the person's desire about where their money should go, and that sort of thing, and the money. We do not have that at the moment in terms of the Catholic system and I agree with that.

But if we move to greater equity, as we seem to be, in those terms, the difficulty I have then is with the notion that some commercial activity might, in fact, have its money sent to a system which it would rather not have its money sent to because the number of students in that given year, or maybe even for a period of years, in that system is higher than in the other system. I am wondering if that does not betray a principle which is fundamental to the whole notion of Catholic school funding, on the one side of things, and then to our concepts at this point of using the property tax.

Mr Dequanne: Basically, to look at the concept of the commercial enterprise designating

its school support, if it is a corporation it is within the pooling concept. I do not think it really matters whether the portion is done on a student basis or on a residential-farm split because, in effect, that assessment is automatically thrown into the pooling figure.

I think our concern over expressing the apportionment of the pooling dollars on the per student basis would be more reflective of the number of students there are within the separate system as opposed to the public system, and it does eliminate the possibility of errors that are found through enumeration or—what was that term that was used?—of automatically putting it into the public system. I think that is one of the fears that would be removed by using the per-pupil basis.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I cannot help but feel that a move away from the whole property tax base would be your better move. Then looking at per-pupil cost in terms of ceilings, etc, real ceilings being established might not be an even safer way of doing that without necessarily offending the basic democratic principle about where you direct your tax, especially in these matters where it could be a denominational question, to which we are all very sensitive, of course, these days.

Mr Dequanne: Point well taken.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I appreciate very much the brief, though. Again, it is going to make a lot of work for Dr Bob back here as he tries to put together all these recommendations and will make our decisions more complicated, not that we ever thought they were going to be particularly easy, around finance, but they are very practical and very helpful recommendations.

Mr Villeneuve: Gentlemen, thank you for your presentation. There is an old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." The schedule that you have at the bottom of page 6 says a lot there, with 56 per cent of the students in your system with exactly a third of the residential-commercial equalized assessment to cover their education. I guess some of the things that my colleague the member for Scarborough West (Mr R. F. Johnston) was talking about are pretty self-explanatory.

Do you share facilities at all with the public support?

Mr Dequanne: Not on the educational basis. No.

Mr Villeneuve: Do you share transportation at all?

Mr Dequanne: Yes, we do.

Mr Villeneuve: Is that working well?

Mr Dequanne: To my knowledge, yes, it is.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have been doing that for some time, have you not?

Mr Dequanne: Yes.

Mr Boucher: If I may add, a very small amount of transportation is shared between the two boards, especially in the outer parts of our jurisdictions where long travel is involved. That is where we do share the transportation.

Mr Villeneuve: Which is reasonable; but it is not a large saving, I gather.

Mr Boucher: There is not a large amount of shared transportation. It is not a large saving. No.

Mr Villeneuve: Lot levies, of course, are always intriguing. You have expressed your concerns over the reduction in capital funding. Inevitably, sooner or later your plant wears out. Certainly, your area would not be really improved financially with lot levies. I wonder if you could just comment. Should a school board decide to not apply lot levies, would you see the funding on the capital side of things remain at the present level? Should it be higher? Should it be lower? There would certainly be some big winners in lot levies, and if the funding is reduced across the board to 60 per cent, there will be some large losers as well. Can you comment on that a bit?

Mr Dequanne: Maybe those who get a windfall from lot levies should be sharing with those who are less fortunate. As far as lot levies in our particular situation go, I do not think it would be all that beneficial. I think everyone from the north who has made a presentation today has indicated that lot levies would not create any kind of windfall.

Mr Keyes: No building boom.

Mr Dequanne: No building boom.

Mr Villeneuve: None anticipated.

Mr Dequanne: No. Those properties that are being developed are existing plans to subdivisions that have been in place for years.

Mr Villeneuve: And you are probably in an area where some of the new homes would not necessarily be to people with young families requiring the services of a school or creating a pressure on the school. You probably have it back in your existing residential areas, so lot levies would not be addressing the problem in areas that tend to be like northern Ontario or a lot of the eastern part of Ontario, with little or no real growth.

Mr Dequanne: That is correct.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The Sudbury basin must have some growth, though, as compared to a lot of other parts of the north, does it not?

Mr Boucher: We do have some growth. However, it is not to the degree that you have pockets of 1,000 homes going up here and there. We do have some small developments here and there scattered throughout the jurisdiction, but nothing to any great degree. That is why we have very severe reservations about what is being proposed, especially in our particular case with new development. It is not that we are going to be building an awful lot of new schools, but we do have a severe requirement for secondary accommodation and it puts us in a position whereby, for those particular new projects which we may have to face very soon, we have to go and get 40 per cent of that funding with the proposed legislation. That puts us at a disadvantage.

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Second, over the years we have had to suffer by letting our present accommodation deteriorate to a certain point to keep our mill rate down and to keep our taxes reasonable. We are at the point where this is becoming very difficult to maintain and we are going to be facing very, very serious costs with regard to at least trying to bring our buildings back to an acceptable level and to provide a quality education.

That, we are told now, is not even being considered or, if it is to any degree, it is going to be limited to 75 per cent, a reduction from where we are currently. Our present rate of grant on those kinds of projects is higher than 75 per cent, so we lose on both sides. That is why we have very serious concerns about that particular proposed legislation.

Mr Villeneuve: I can certainly agree with your comments. One final question. In recommendation 6, item 2, you suggest, "Notice of assessment forms should continue to be sent each year where there has been any change in the file and to all multiple-dwelling buildings." Is there some rumour that this would not continue?

Mr Boucher: No, there is not. We simply want to ensure that it does continue. There has been no indication that it has stopped.

Mr Villeneuve: Because, I tell you, enumeration has not been a good experience, particularly for French and Roman Catholic school supporters. So you are just reinforcing the fact that it not be even considered to be eliminated.

Mr Boucher: A step further, if I may, with regard to enumeration as we are touching on that

in recommendation 6. We are indicating that where there is not the specific identification as to whether you are public or separate, as opposed to defaulting to public, it be left as unidentified. That particular pool of people who have not specifically identified themselves, for whatever reason, then could be shared on the per-pupil ratio or whatever, but they should not be defaulted automatically to public.

Mr Villeneuve: Interesting. Thank you.

Mr Keyes: Just following up on that, in your recommendation you suggested that it continue to be sent just where there has been any change in the file. It has to be the practice that every place will get its annual assessment notice regardless of whether there has been a change in the file or not, so that it automatically goes out. Hopefully, that will be the way it will continue. I think that is the way, so that whether there is a change or not, it would go out. We could find out.

I can agree. I think twice today we have flown over, and in a few hours will fly over for the third time, all those areas where the lot levies will probably be applied as we see the acres and acres of land that have been scalped and are ready for development as we looked at it today.

I was wondering, though, in order to try to allow local autonomy and local accountability, as I am trying to look at the issue of how best for the ministry to grapple with putting more dollars into the system on an equitable basis, I have to agree with Mr Johnston that more and more it is becoming evident that we will have to pool the commercial and industrial assessment on a province-wide basis and redistribute it on a per-pupil basis and perhaps allow the income tax as a method of raising additional dollars. But I do not think you would want us to take over from the province and penalize boards for spending beyond ceilings. I think you would still want that type of autonomy somewhere.

What is the best method for us to increase the spending: Will we simply raise the ceilings? Do we want to go backward to the time when you could not spend beyond certain ceilings? Do you want to see a combination where you raise ceilings but allow additional spending but only up to a limit? All of this is going to mean more money for the Toronto coffers, of course, to pay out.

Mr Boucher: Maybe five or 10 years ago when a lot of boards were below ceiling, the present system of funding was adequate. The only problem, I think, that has occurred in the past year has been the fact that that particular ceiling is not reflective of today's cost of

providing that service. That is the problem that effectively is dragging us down, especially in the separate schools, because we do not have that assessment on which we can rely to pass on the extra cost.

But I think, if the true cost of education on a per-pupil basis were reflected in those general legislative grants or whatever formula you want to use, then perhaps the problems *per se* would not be here today. They have not kept pace.

Mr Keyes: But sometimes the assessment-rich boards, which have many more dollars, will then be more innovative in putting out a lot more programs. I was wondering if you want to retain that autonomy for those rich boards. You would not want to see the province going to the point of limiting the expenditures by boards.

Mr Boucher: No, I do not think we would want to see it at that point. We would certainly want the local autonomy to be maintained and not restricted.

Mr Keyes: I am just looking at how you see the government, when everyone goes back to answer Mr Villeneuve's question, the 60 per cent of the total cost of education, where does the government provide its control factor? We have to have somewhere in there a control factor. If we say, "60 per cent of all costs of education," then what you throw out as your costs and what the Toronto boards throw out are going to be vastly different. No one in any of our presentations, when they talk about 60 per cent of the cost of education, has touched on putting in what is the limiting factor on cost.

Mr Boucher: Knowing that the ceiling is so low, obviously from our point of view or perspective we start with total cost, the ultimate, if you want, being that we would want to get 60 per cent. However, if these ceilings are accurate and reflective of today's conditions, maybe it becomes 60 per cent to a particular ceiling which is reflective of today's situation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Indexed in some fashion.

Mr Boucher: Indexed to keep track or to keep up with times as inflation annually dips into that value.

Mr Villeneuve: Take the top spender's 10 per cent off, the bottom spender's 10 per cent off, and it is just an average in the middle of what it costs.

Mr Keyes: We may have to look at that. I think that is the key. Where do you arrive at something that is considered reasonable expenditures per board or per pupil to provide the basic program, and that becomes the ceiling. That is

what the government strives for in the 60 per cent. Very few have said 100 per cent yet. Some said 75 per cent, but everyone is acknowledging that there should be responsibility at the local level for a certain percentage of the costs.

Mr Boucher: Exactly for that basis. I think local politicians and trustees are recognizing that they want to maintain accountability and autonomy and therefore must share a certain responsibility with regard to the costs involved.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do they have less responsibility and less autonomy if they have only seven per cent of the share, as is often the case in some northern boards, as compared with Toronto where they are paying 99.9 per cent of the costs? I think that is one of the difficulties we have in the system when we start talking about autonomy in those terms these days. I wish it were a lot easier than it is.

Mr Boucher: Further to that, I guess the problem of autonomy, if I may, is really tied into those situations whereby we are being asked to get into additional programs whereby we have no control. Obviously, as you are most aware, when some of these things are announced by the government, we are forced—our hands are really tied—and we have to provide, yet we are not in control. It is being imposed, yet we have to share the burden.

Mr Keyes: Just in conclusion, the brief was an excellent one. It is a good way to conclude our day, with a very positive recommendation. I am sure the minister will read it very eagerly, prodded by his parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Chairman: As I am only acting chair and we are few in number, I would like to take the prerogative of asking a couple of questions. I think I have a little bit of consensus on that.

I was wondering, on page 4, if you were suggesting what you may get if you were getting the same access to assessment. Have you done a projection on the phase-in over the next six years of the pooling of commercial-industrial assessment and how it is going to affect your board?

Mr Boucher: We have not specifically done that. All we have had is access to ministry information. For your information, it was projected that, based on that simulation model, our board would benefit to the tune of some \$780,000 per year for the next six years, amounting to almost \$4.6 or \$4.7 million at the end of the sixth year.

The Acting Chairman: You consider that quite helpful, I would suggest.

Mr Boucher: We are cautiously optimistic that it will in fact result in those particular additional revenues for us.

The Acting Chairman: May I ask you to turn to page 7 and say a little bit more about your recommendation 3, which I somehow cannot seem to get the meaning of?

Mr Dequanne: Basically what we are commenting on here is that there was a little bit of ambiguity as to what would be included in the pooling of assessments. What we are kind of ascertaining here is that the assessment that any corporation has, regardless of whether it is commercial-industrial or residential, would be included in the overall pooling concept. It is kind of ironic to say that a corporation would have a residential property, but if we refer, for example, to a shopping centre—

The Acting Chairman: Thank you. The other thing I wanted to ask you a little bit about was your summer school program, which seems to be much more extensive than most boards would have. When I just look at this in rough mathematics, it looks like 30 per cent of your students attend some kind of summer school. Would that be a correct assumption?

Mr Boucher: Yes, I believe we have about 5,000 students out of a total population of some 19,000, so a large proportion of our students do attend those enrichment programs.

The Acting Chairman: Would most of these have been enrichment rather than remedial, which I understand was acceptable for grant purposes? You have 234 courses. Would they all be considered either general interest or enrichment?

Mr Boucher: There was a combination of them both in there. As you are aware, the ones that lead to a credit have still been maintained. However, it is the other ones which have been dropped by the ministry.

The Acting Chairman: So 234 were dropped?

Mr Boucher: We are talking about 234 courses that we would have offered which have been dropped by this announcement by the ministry.

The Acting Chairman: That is quite a few.

Mr Keyes: Just to follow up on that, is it by any chance the board of education that provides the recreational programs for the area of Sudbury?

Mr Boucher: The board of education?

Mr Keyes: Are a lot of those courses that normally would be run by the municipality under the recreational community, and are you running them?

Mr Boucher: Not to my knowledge specifically.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you send us a list? It is a staggering number of programs; it really is.

Mr Keyes: When you get a third of your students enrolled, to me it would suggest—and that is why I wanted to see if you could clarify it—that many of those might have been the interest programs operated by municipal government through its recreational programs and that while they are enrichment, it is possible that that is what accounts for a number of them. I have no idea, but it is a possibility.

Mr Boucher: Off the top, I cannot answer the question specifically. However, I would be happy to send to the committee a list of what they are.

The Acting Chairman: Please send that to the clerk, and he will distribute it to the committee.

I would like to just say one other thing. On page 13, if my understanding is correct, you are making a presumption regarding the elimination from the tax for hospitals, colleges and universities. I do not think it is an elimination, in some cases at least, particularly for colleges and universities. There is certainly some consideration being given to their budgeting year and to some of the situations in which they find themselves regarding out-of-province employees and such, but I do not think there is a strict elimination right across the board. I would like you to clarify that for yourselves, and certainly I will do the same for myself.

Mr Johnston: do you have a further question?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would have a further question, if only to annoy the people who are running the sound system who have to pack up all the equipment they have and catch a plane by five to seven, but I am not that nasty a person, even though my reputation does precede me, I am sure. I will hold back all the other questions I had to ask you.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Boucher and Mr Dequanne, it has been a pleasure. As you can see, we have ended our day with a lot of stimulating discussion. Thank you.

Mr Dequanne: We thank you very much for hearing us out. Have a pleasant trip back.

The committee adjourned at 1734.

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Financement du système scolaire

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 21 September 1989



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 21 September 1989

The committee met at 1012 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this morning's session of the select committee on education. Perhaps I could ask members to please take their seats. We are going to start the proceedings.

The select committee is now back in Toronto as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario. We will be specifically looking at the future of education financing relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

Before we get started with our first presentation today, I have two announcements. The first is that the ministry has supplied a copy of Education Funding in Ontario for members of the committee. I believe you were previously given this document; however, this one is much more extensive. All the latter pages and indexes are new. You may want to look at those tables. The second matter before we go to our presentation is the summary of concerns and recommendations on education finance to date and Dr Gardner will address that.

Dr Gardner: Some members have the first of our weekly summaries of concerns and recommendations. It is really only the first couple of days last week in Toronto, so it is fairly thin yet. What we will do is that we will put all the stuff we have had from this week into the next summary, which you will get on Tuesday when the committee is back from Windsor. That will give some meat before we then do some initial directions. Then there will probably be two more before the end of the session. So this one is a bit thin. It is really only the first couple of days, but we still thought you should have it in front of you.

The Chairman: Our first delegation today is the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. Perhaps you would begin by identifying yourself for Hansard, although since you have been before us before, I think all the members know who you are. We would like to clarify that for the record.

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SUPERVISORY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Mr Ferren: Good morning, Madam Chairman and members of the select committee. I am Peter Ferren. I am the president of the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association.

Mr Sweeney: I am Fred Sweeney and I am the vice-president of OCSOA.

The Chairman: We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we hope you can save part of that for questions from the members. Perhaps you would begin whenever you are ready.

Mr Ferren: OCSOA is appreciative of this opportunity to present some of its views on the financing of education. We shall try to keep within the established parameters of addressing adequacy, accountability and equity, and some other issues that may arise will be merely as background to those particular issues. Those terms are open to various interpretations but rather than become involved in semantics, we shall try to define our interpretation of the terms and proceed with our proposals on that basis.

In terms of accountability, we understand this term to mean that those in charge of the system, the elected officials and the appointed officials, as well as the Ministry of Education, are answerable for what happens in it. We are looking at accountability in four areas: fiscal accountability, referring to the honest and effective handling of resources; process accountability, relating to the experiences that students receive while they are in school; product accountability, addressing what students learn and achieve during their formal years of education; and scope accountability, relating to all that education is expected to cover and accomplish during those years.

In each of these areas, criteria are needed before people can be held accountable, although the criteria may be very difficult to arrive at, especially in the areas of quality of life, etc.

For fiscal responsibility, we think there are many ways presently in which boards are held fiscally accountable, including audits, ministry inspection and also facing the electorate.

In process accountability, we are talking about the daily, monthly and yearly experiences of the

students. Students must be assured of a humane and nurturing life experience while they are in their formal years of school. Tradition, the training of teachers, professional norms and parental interest all tend to promote this process accountability. These factors also keep the system accountable in an ongoing way.

In terms of product accountability, a series of reports with which you certainly are familiar and with which we are all familiar, the Radwanski report, the report of the Premier's Council, etc., have suggested that education has not in recent times paid enough attention to outcomes; that is, student achievement and mastery. It is a common perception, it seems, that knowledge and skill development have not been stressed adequately enough in the system. We agree that the ministry should be more active in setting standards and in measuring and evaluating against those particular standards.

Recent developments have included systematic ministry reviews of key programs and participation in international surveys of achievement. These are meaningful initiatives and they are to be encouraged and supported from our point of view. There is really more accountability in this area than is publicized and perhaps more publicity is what is needed.

In terms of scope accountability, it seems that the load that has been put on education has increased significantly in recent years. It is difficult at times to pin down who or what is responsible for this trend. It seems that there is no accountability for the growth in the range of programs and services. There is no doubt that in a sense all the parties in education are responsible at some time or other for contributing to the list of expectations that are placed upon the schools and school systems.

We would suggest that it is time this process was rationalized to some extent. It might be worth considering a method of bringing the parties together to get some kind of viable agenda for education in the next decade and beyond.

Fred will address the issue of adequacy and equity.

1020

Mr Sweeney: We would define adequacy as the provision of sufficient resources to meet the legitimate demands placed on the system from all sources. It is the range of programs and services that are offered by boards of education that obviously impinges on the adequacy of this funding. Taking the present level of demand as reasonable, a case can be made for saying that the current level of funding is barely adequate. I am

sure that is something you have not heard this morning for the first time.

Certainly, many boards would claim that the provincial share of current funding is not adequate. However, in the absence of norms or standards of service, this argument is endless. In a sense, there would never be enough money because there are so many legitimate needs and good ideas in the system.

In the area of equity, we define equity as the fair provincial distribution on a per-pupil basis of whatever resources are available for education from all sources. We have included at the back of our paper today a graph that will clearly indicate to you that there is not equity in this province. It is not only equity between separate schools and public schools, but between public school boards and other public school boards.

We see the recently announced changes in educational finance as being very hopeful. They will result in increased revenue for the great majority of boards, resulting in, first, more adequate funding, second, more boards living within the ceilings, and third, greater equity among boards across this province.

Mr Ferren: For these reasons, the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association strongly supports the initiatives for change that have been announced by the government. We would urge all committee members to do likewise, at least in principle. These changes are likely to increase the possibility of equal opportunity in education for all the students in the province.

In our view, the single biggest problem in educational finance in the province at the moment is equity. We feel that it is finally being addressed. Only when it has been fully addressed will it be possible for the other issues to receive the attention they deserve from the whole educational community. When equity is achieved, it will be meaningful to discuss programs and services and adequacy. When all participants are on a reasonably level playing field, it will be meaningful to talk about accountability in all of the areas we have outlined. Then discussion can focus on what boards should be offering, what society can afford and what is a reasonable compromise between the two.

In this regard, it might be meaningful for the select committee, if it has a further round of discussions, to tackle the educational agenda regarding programs and services.

The recommendations we make are:

1. That the select committee support the initiatives taken by the government to introduce greater equity into educational finance;

2. That the select committee endorse the current practices with regard to accountability in education;

3. That the current practices with regard to accountability receive wider publicity than they have had to date;

4. That some forum for the discussion of the scope of services to be offered by education be established;

5. That the select committee advise the province to establish a formula which relates a definition of "appropriate service" to adequate funding so that the provincial share can be both adequate and realistic;

6. That the select committee take on, as part of its agenda, a study of programs and services;

7. Finally, that at some point the select committee attempt to define the total mandate of the educational system and suggest some criteria for establishing priorities.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation today. I particularly like the way you have made your recommendations very clear and separate from the balance of the report. We will start the questioning with Mrs O'Neill.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sorry I had to step out for a moment. I did not expect to be the first questioner. I am very interested in the seventh recommendation you made. Perhaps I missed out on some of your comments on that.

I wonder how you feel about the new format, with the Ministry of Education being much more closely associated now with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Skills Development. I am sorry; if you said more about this I will go to Hansard, but if you would like to say a little bit about this, please say a little more. This is a very tall order.

Mr Ferren: Yes, I realize it is a tall order and I guess out there in the field the feeling prevails that the expectations that are put upon the system seem to be coming fast and furious.

Realizing that it is a tall order, we think it is time that the parties somehow establish some format whereby that agenda can be clarified, or at least some clear parameters be established so that the parties that are particularly affected by it have lots of advance notice and planning in order to implement expectations that may originate from any of the parties, whether it be the parent community, the government or the professional educators.

Specifically, I personally think that is a progressive move, and I know we would support the joining together of the skills development area with education.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for helping me understand what you are trying to achieve here. Hopefully, we will be able to make some recommendations. I am really very happy that you have given such a strong endorsement to our attempts at accountability, which I suggest are likely in somewhat of an embryonic stage. But I am happy that people such as yourselves, who have to implement them at the provincial level, are endorsing them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I differ with you pretty substantially on a number of the things you are putting forward because I tend to think that our accountability mechanisms are still somewhat rudimentary. In fact, I am not sure that even your document touched necessarily on all the notions of accountability that are involved. I will come back to that.

I am also really concerned that the adequacy levels and the response to that through the equity approach that has been taken is potentially dangerous as well. Let me just preface my question with a fair number of remarks, after a week's hearings now, on the way my mind is starting to go on this kind of thing.

Mrs O'Neill: That is always your style, isn't it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Generally speaking. I hate to miss a chance for a speech, as you know.

Mr Mahoney: It's always the same one, though.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, this is going to be slightly different. It always evolves, as you know. It has been striking me, however, that the notions of pooling that have been put forward to deal with the equity situation, and in some measure, as you indicate, to perhaps deal with adequacy across the province, in fact do an interesting thing in that they devolve responsibility down to the local level again in terms of the property tax and, in this case, the commercial-industrial base of that tax, presuming in some ways that necessarily is a good base upon which to place a large amount of the costs of education.

I am becoming increasingly concerned that nobody is questioning that premise sufficiently from two angles. One is the pressure on the individual property taxpayer at this point, who I think finds it very difficult to understand why he is paying so much of his property tax towards education. Even in Sudbury yesterday, we learned that the average bill for education purposes is around \$700 off the property tax. Those people really do not know where that money goes in the education pie. They have no

idea what section of what is taking place in education that tax dollar is accountable for, rather than their provincial tax dollars that might be out there.

The other thing is that the range of differences in communities in terms of their commercial-industrial base is enormous, and therefore to look at that on a local, region-by-region basis as the means of developing equity can maybe produce more equity among poor boards and more equity among rich boards, but it is not going to do much among the others, and it also does not take into account at all what can happen in a place like the Sault or Sudbury where an economic turndown in one industry can destroy the commercial base for the entire area for quite a substantial period. With greater and greater emphasis being put on that, as we see the provincial income tax dollars disappearing, we are ending up with what I think is a very dangerous kind of situation.

Nobody knows where his money is going, what programs it pays for and what he should be holding a local board responsible for as opposed to the provincial government, and with the province now gradually reducing the level down to 45 per cent of the costs, who knows where we will be by the end of this devolution of pooling in terms of provincial share?

I wonder if you can address that issue a little. It was one of the Macdonald recommendations, which nobody seems to be talking about very much, to change the tax base to make the accountability much more strongly provincial in many ways than it is at the moment.

Mr Sweeney: We would certainly be very, very much in favour of the government increasing its share of the funding of education, at least back up to the 60 per cent level, which it was back in the late or mid-1970s. One of the biggest discrepancies, of course, as we find in all of our separate school boards, is the money that is spent on education that is over and above the ceilings. That is nothing new; that has been going on for years and years.

If you look at that graph at the back of our paper, you will see that. Even public school boards such as the Lincoln County Board of Education and the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, what they are spending per pupil expenditure compared to the city of Toronto: The Lincoln county separate school board spends 40 per cent less because that is what it has; the Lincoln county public school board spends about 25 per cent less.

Local assessment is very, very obvious to a taxpayer, because he gets it on a piece of paper

that says, "You're paying \$700 to education." I guess that goes along with one of the main points of the paper; that is, it is not enough. Maybe there has to be an increase in ceilings, which would mean an increase in grant from the provincial government. We also have a suggestion in there that if boards do want to go over ceilings, perhaps it should come just from the residential assessment rather than from the commercial and industrial and that there possibly may be a reduction in grant as a result of that. That is something you have to think about, because it does change.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It becomes very complicated as well. The difficulty in contrasting Lincoln and Metropolitan Toronto directly is to ignore the fact that service requirements are different in those two areas as well, and factors such as the fact that most of the immigrants in our society are coming to Toronto. That, producing all sorts of extra need and extra kinds of programs, is quite different from the demand on a place like Lincoln, etc.

Mr Sweeney: It is worth 40 per cent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Who knows? That is the problem. I think you identified that as well. That brings me to the notion of the audits that you are basically saying you are happy with. One of the things that seems to be missing at the moment, in my view, is the notion of a comprehensive audit of the boards in particular, but, in another way, of the boards and the ministry at the same time and in tandem in terms of the huge bureaucratic growth that we have seen and the supervisory officers.

I wonder if I can get your comments on that. At the moment, there is no notion of a comprehensive audit independently done of the boards, either alone or in connection with what the ministry is doing in terms of duplication: Are we serving students or are we serving the bureaucrats, the boards and the ministries?

Mr Ferren: When we referred to some of the issues of accountability, we are saying there are accountability factors there. We are not saying that those are exhaustive or complete. We as an association would not object to, and would support, a comprehensive audit of the type you refer to. I do not think that all the issues under accountability have been addressed adequately by any means, in terms of responsibility to our various electorates, our various partners in education. But certainly we would support increased measures in terms of audit on a system-wide basis and in relation to ministry expectations.

1030

Mr Jackson: I am pleased that you clarified that point about the extent of that accountability, because that is the section of your brief that intrigued me the most. I was concerned with areas that really at this point are not subject to sound auditing rules.

I cite the example of the unfunded nature of the teachers' retirement gratuity. I was shocked when I first learned that we are not required to show that as a liability. Boards should necessarily show or report that—that it is something that was freely bargained for, that it is a right that teachers have, but it is a debt that the school boards have to pick up. Yet there is no requirement from the auditing firms which do all your school boards to report the unfunded liability.

The other example that has been brought forward to this committee is some sort of internal auditing with respect to declining enrolments and increasing administration in that we are not necessarily directing growth in the system to classroom teaching as opposed to growth in administration, and therefore some sort of auditing of that process should be undertaken.

Could you comment on either of those two areas? I believe there are areas of improvement for broadening the scope of school board accountability, which in turn would make it easier to communicate to the public where the real costs in education are and where the real decisions are being made.

Mr Ferren: There are two issues there. Regarding the first one, the unfunded liability in relation to retirement gratuity, I am just not sure what issue you are getting at, but certainly in the local auditors' reports of each board, those are clearly spelled out. In relation to our board, I know what the retirement gratuity liabilities are for the board. Certainly for most boards in the province, that is of major concern.

Mr Jackson: It is not a requirement from the ministry, as I understand it. I had to have a board motion on that. But maybe we could get that point cleared up through staff, who can get back to us on that.

Can I get some feedback on this concept of growth in administration versus growth in classroom teaching?

Mr Ferren: I can obviously speak from the point of view of the board I am involved with and from a reasonable knowledge of other boards across the province. It is my impression—I think I can support that by statistics—that most boards endeavour very aggressively to provide and put

most of their resources where they are most needed, and that is in the classroom. When I look at the provincial statistics in, say, pupil-teacher ratios and classroom sizes, I have trouble thinking they are suffering in that regard.

There is no question that there has been growth in what you referred to as the bureaucracy or the supervisory officials, but I think it is, again, directly related to what we have addressed in the brief in terms of expectations that are placed upon school systems. The local board obviously has control of some of them, but we certainly do not have control over those that come from the outside, and they have to be addressed. Sometimes the only way of addressing those is by an increase in the personnel who have to handle those issues.

Mr Sweeney: If I could just pick up on that a bit, too, he talked about boards where there is decline and whether or not there is an increase in senior administrative staff. I am from a board in Durham, just east of here, where our pupil numbers have gone up about 60 to 65 per cent in the last seven years and our senior administrative staff has gone up only 38 per cent.

1040

Other things that take up a lot of time are government initiatives, one being the child care centre. We do not argue with the concept of child care centres in schools; we believe in that. But York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board has had to hire an assistant superintendent just to deal with that issue. It is a lot bigger issue than anybody realized when it came to us.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In our area, of course, it begs the question of accountability, as well. If you are going to demand accountability, then you have to have structures in place for that, as you say.

There are two other things I wanted to try to touch on.

Mrs O'Neill: Before you go on, I have a point of information on the point Mr Jackson is making. I do feel there has been a very extensive study in this province, called the Jackson report, as a matter of fact, on the decline in enrolment, and its recommendations might be helpful to the committee. It is quite an extensive report, but the recommendations themselves might be helpful.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I had forgotten he did it.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, that is the problem.

Mr Jackson: God rest his soul. He is dead now.

Mrs O'Neill: I think we could ask our research person to get that. I also feel that somewhere in

that report the demographics were suggesting that by 1992 the enrolment in this province would somehow stabilize and would no longer be in any kind of decline. In fact, at the present moment it is on a slight upward trend. Maybe we would want to verify those figures and facts, but that is my memory of that.

The Chairman: Dr Gardner will attempt to get a copy of the Jackson recommendations for us, as well as the confirmation of what the statistics are on the enrolment decline. We have approximately zero seconds left. I think Mr Johnston had a final brief question, and also Mr Villeneuve.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will tie my last two questions into one then, which is easily done. It has to do with the ceilings and the methodology for arriving at ceilings that are appropriate at the moment. I think we have to figure out what the process is among the involved players for making sure we get realistic ceilings to start off; then indexing them in one fashion or another seems to me to be easy to do.

So the question is two-sided. Have you done an analysis of why the ceilings are so out of whack? Has it been new program demand as much or more than the lack of pass-through of dollars to keep up with the inflationary costs to the boards and the unexpected student numbers, etc? Have you done that kind of thing that can be used as a backdrop for us?

Everybody comes in sort of asserting that the ceilings are wrong, from the one side; the government still clings to them from the other side. I have not heard yet of an analysis that has been done of why they are so out of whack, which I accept as a fact, and where we would go as a process for establishing new ceilings and a process to deal with them from then on.

Mr Ferren: We certainly have not done an analysis, a formal study, in relation to those. It probably would be a very profitable undertaking and I think beneficial. But there is no doubt from the spending patterns of boards across the province that they are inadequate, that people are just not able to operate under those ceilings. One of the reasons, obviously, is that the ministry has not kept up with the costs for the programs and services that are needed in the boards. But I do not have results of any formal study that we carried out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the process? I think one of the other things that has been bad about the system is that, again for accountability purposes, you have unilateral decisions about what an appropriate ceiling is, which then throws

all sorts of pressure back on to boards to have to deal with their electorate. It seems to me that, obviously, major players have to be involved in this and not just the ministry.

Mr Sweeney: I do not know how to quite answer that except that in 1989 a number of school boards have had to increase their tax rates at the local level anywhere from 10 per cent to 15 per cent, and some to 20 per cent. That should be a clear enough indication that the ceilings are not high enough. It is not something new. Every presentation that has been made to every Treasurer of Ontario for the last 10 years has said that, but for some reason that just does not happen.

As time has gone by in the last eight or 10 years, more and more school boards have had to go over ceiling to meet the requirements placed upon education, some requirements that a lot of people even question whether we should be involved in. But we are involved in them.

The Chairman: A brief final question by Mr Villeneuve.

Mr Villeneuve: Accountability is most important and I think you are probably the first group that has emphasized it considerably more than most. What we have heard to this point is, "There isn't enough money and it's your problem to go get it for us." I think there is a lot more to it than that. I come from an area where we have had a 17 per cent increase in education tax simultaneous with fairly substantial cutbacks in service. It begs the question that somewhere down the line there must have been something that was going wrong.

I am always going back to the approved costs as opposed to the real costs. I guess it is a bit of a supplementary to my colleague Richard here. Your recommendations are very much oriented in that direction. Recommendations 4 to 7 really say: Look at what the curriculum is; what it should be. In your opinion, how do we arrive at some sort of consensus here: rich boards versus boards that are struggling? I think it will continue to be that way. Lot levies may even compound that. How does this committee effectively say to the Ministry of Education, "We have to establish curriculums that are realistic"?

The board I represent has made some pretty substantial statements that we should not be into the things that you call day care, or at least it should be funded through another means than through education. I am wide open here.

I realize you come from a totally different area. We were in northern Ontario yesterday and they are very much struggling. When we have some of the downtown money-rich boards very

artfully creating requirements for funds, it is going to be a bit of a job to try to tell them to cut back and be generous and share some of their surplus funds. What would your approach be in a situation like that? I guess you represent some of the more affluent boards or the more monetarily solid boards in the area.

Mr Ferren: I spent 23 years of my career in northern Ontario, so I am aware of the problems they have in financing education in the north too.

To answer generally, we are into that area of the scope of education, an issue that I think is critical. I like what I see of the direction the ministry seems to be taking at this point in time in the planning process for the various divisions. It seems it is a long-range planning process in which they are going to pilot some of the programs before there is full implementation. I think that is a move in the right direction. If the results of that are a clearer direction for all school systems and clearer expectations of the scope of programs, then I think we are in a better position to address the adequacy of financing.

I think we have to address that issue first, because if everybody and anybody can load on the school system and load down the programs they are expected to offer but at the same time not provide the accompanying resources, it is just a continuing spiral we are going to be facing.

Mr Villeneuve: The other area that was touched on was of course adult education: Should it be with the Ministry of Education, with the Ministry of Skills Development, with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities? As you have just mentioned, all these things tend to be dumped on the school board, to provide the services, to provide the facilities, to provide the personnel.

We also have in many areas duplication of services. In rural Ontario, for instance, and transportation for separate and public boards, we have buses chasing one another up and down our road systems. Could you comment on that a bit? I know this may be out of your bailiwick.

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Mr Ferren: I can only comment from experience. In northern Ontario, when I was involved, we had joint transportation, public and separate boards. Where I am right now in the Niagara region, both boards, public and separate, carried out a study for a whole year on the combining of their transportation systems, and it was not to their advantage to do so. We were better off providing our own, and there was not that much duplication. I am sure there are areas of the province where there is duplication, but I

think that is an area that is the proper responsibility of the two boards. I cannot see why they cannot work closer together in eliminating those duplications.

The Chairman: Thank you for your input to our committee today.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. Mr Head, could you bring your delegation up? Good morning. Welcome back to our committee. We always appreciate the input of the OSSTF. In the past we have found that your briefs have been very helpful to us because they usually contain a fair amount of background material. You are of great assistance to our researcher, I think.

Would you like to begin by introducing the members of your panel today? We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time, which will include, hopefully, some time for members' questions.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr Head: Yes, we are aware of that and we appreciate the opportunity.

First of all, let me introduce our presenters. We have our general secretary, David Eaton, immediately on my right, and our vice-president of protective services, Doris St Amand. On my left is the vice-president of educational services, Kim McCulloch, and the chairman of our education finance, which does the research for these kinds of papers, John McEwen.

We have other members of the executive with us: Bob Garthson, Jim Livermore and Liz Barkley, and our staff persons, Larry French, our legislative researcher, and Ron Harris, who is attached to education finance. We came well prepared. Our resident photographer, Jack Hut-ton, is also here.

The Chairman: Since several of my constituents are involved in the presentation, I know it will be a fine one. I had to put in that little plug for Eglinton.

Mr Head: We have provided a brief with an insert that was done as late as two in the morning last night by John McEwen. We will be referring to that. It is not our intention to go through the whole brief word by word. We are going to highlight areas and take it through there, so there will be time for questions.

We are going to start at the foreword and simply say that we do welcome this opportunity once again before the committee. We recognize the importance of these hearings, especially as you have gone around Ontario this time for them.

It is really the first scrutiny since the extension of public funding to the Roman Catholic secondary school system in 1985.

Since that moment, public boards have been struggling to cope with the fallout of Bill 30 in the areas of pupil enrolment, staffing, school transfer, assessment and grants. I do want to stress here that it is not our intention in any way go back into history and look all over again at Bill 30. Rather, I think our figures will show that we use total education costs for the full systems. We are talking essentially about total funding throughout. We will make points, of course, about our own system.

It is our intent also to try not to take any money away from anybody. We are not in that process. What we are looking at is what funding is necessary for all systems, especially in the light of certain events. We are trying to protect the public education system, which we believe is open to both students and teachers.

There has been a little good news therefore in that light. In this climate of provincial fiscal restraint, all too often a separate board gain has represented a public board loss. Until the province intervened in the school transfer dispute in Metro and Hamilton with the injection of capital funds, for example, the stress placed on the public system produced insecurity, disruption and acrimony.

The pooling of undesignated commercial and industrial assessment represents another classic working out of the win/loss conundrum. We will take you through the insert that was provided, but I think if you look at the stats at the back they speak for themselves.

It is our strongly held contention that the pooling models and associated funding mechanisms will place a distinct additional burden on public boards. We suggest that this is inappropriate. Public boards should not have their fiscal base negatively affected in the process of the implementation of a government decision to stabilize the financing of another system.

We have pleaded with the government to respect the spirit of the principles underlying the implementation of the extension of separate school funding and reminded it of the declaration of the Minister of Education (Mr Conway) that the first principle was that the viability of the public system would not be negatively affected. That was when he was first Minister of Education, and we welcome him back. We do not believe that this pledge is being kept, and this disturbing disservice should be addressed.

The report of the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario began with the following statement: "The first principles upon which the financing of education should be based are, we believe, adequacy and fairness." I do notice that many of the recommendations of the Macdonald commission are being carried out, and the OSSTF calls on the government to immediately address the funding needs of the public school system in light of the two principles enunciated by the commission.

In pursuit of equity the government has assiduously enhanced its funding to separate and francophone education. We have no quarrel with that. It has done so within a climate of general provincial underfunding that has plagued Ontario education since the mid-1970s. The result has been that public education has received progressively less of the provincial funding share, at the same time as separate education has received more. A glance at the breakdown in grants since 1985 will verify this analysis.

If you look at the chart you can see that the separate school share is going up as enrolment goes up, and the public school share is going down as enrolment goes down. Although the public board share of the general legislative grants, the operating grants, has dropped from 75 per cent to 60 per cent, its share of enrolment has not dropped proportionately. I have actual figures here, and essentially we have dropped from 78.6 per cent to 70.1 per cent. The separate school system has gone from 21.4 per cent—this is total enrolment in both elementary and secondary—to 29.9 per cent. This is exactly an 8.5 per cent loss/increase for each.

We think then that the grants should have gone down proportionately. If it went down 8.5 and up 8.5, it should have been equally altered in that way. But we have lost 15 per cent of the grants, as you can see from the chart at the left, at the same time as the separate school system has gained 16 per cent. Our loss is almost double, their gain is almost double, yet the enrolment figures are the same.

The recent funding initiatives that have been implemented in the name of equity then have been inequitable in their effects on public education. Bill 30 residential and farm assessment transfer from public to separate boards at the secondary level, for example, has not been revenue-neutral. OSSTF's analysis of the 1987 grant regulations revealed the following: in 1986 we had the assessment and in 1987 it was the shifts and the grants went up. You can see that the

revenue lost was \$120 million and the increased grants were only \$66 million. Therefore, the shortfall to the public boards was \$54 million.

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That is in each year; it is not just a total. That loss of \$54 million will accumulate each year, and the remaining public taxpayers have been forced to raise an additional \$54 million to meet this shortfall. This sum, a direct result of extension, is continuous and cumulative in its effect. Is the principle of fairness and equity, therefore, being respected?

We make no mention of capital funds. In 1988 the public system, educating two thirds of the students in the province, received only one third of these vital allocations. We are happy to say it was addressed in 1989 and made more equitable, but we have had a great deal of difficulty getting the figures for 1989 and we certainly have no idea of the figures for 1990 or 1991. They have been very difficult to get hold of.

In the best of all possible worlds, the mechanisms of Ontario's foundation grant plan would trigger and compensate public boards via higher grants for all revenue loss due to decreased assessment. The reason this does not happen, of course, is that the grant system only compensates up to the recognized ordinary expenditure ceiling.

We would certainly take issue with the last presentation on the issue of ceilings when 98 per cent of public boards, 88 per cent of separate elementary and 74 per cent of separate secondary boards are spending beyond the recognized ordinary expenditure ceiling. These moneys, we underline, are a totally local responsibility to which the provincial government contributes nothing.

This is the reason separate boards pushed so vigorously for the pooling of undesignated commercial and industrial assessment and public boards resisted with equal intensity. Both systems realize that their only fiscal security lies in the tax base under their direct control. I would add that that is also a responsibility; it is the trustees that have the accountability to the system and so it is within their domain. Taxation is their only method of accountability.

The funding philosophy of this and the previous government has forced this unattractive and ungenerous aggressive-defensive stance upon the boards of education as a condition of their fiscal survival. Adequacy then is the second pillar of educational funding designated by the Macdonald commission. It is an understatement of breathtaking proportion to say that the

government has not and is not addressing this *sine qua non* of fiscal health in Ontario education.

Over-the-ceiling expenditure, the barometer of the inadequacy of the grants to school boards—that is where we take a very definite issue with the last presentation—is an enormous, ever-growing local burden bruising the shoulder of the weary property taxpayer and containing not a single cent of provincial grant money. We have provided the figures for the over-the-ceiling expenditures here and you can see that they are growing. Over-the-ceiling expenditures account for 20 per cent of the total of educational expenditure in Ontario. Ninety per cent of this sum is a public board burden, a relentless downloading of provincial fiscal responsibility on to the public taxpayers.

The inadequacy of Ontario's per pupil expenditure is very clear when one compares it to the norm elsewhere in the nation. Despite the fact that Ontario's economy is the most affluent as well as the costliest—inflation and so on—the grant per pupil is well below the national average expenditure. So when you look at the Ontario weighted per pupil ceiling as an average of Canada, you can see that Ontario is not paying enough, that local taxes are too high and the ceilings are inadequate.

In conclusion, our recognized ordinary grant ceiling is set at a level that brings us to only 60 per cent of the average per pupil cost across Canada. Ontario's grant and ceiling levels are clearly unrealistic. The concepts of fairness and adequacy are simple. It is time to apply their enlightened and energizing warmth to public education in Ontario. All that follows then should be seen in this context. We are willing to help in whatever way we can.

I am going to ask the general secretary, David Eaton, to take us quickly through the remaining pages. We just want to highlight a couple of issues.

Mr Eaton: Thank you. I picked up the word "quickly." I would like to emphasize a couple of points on grants and taxes. One of our difficulties, as the heading says, is keeping the promise and not redefining the promise. The government in 1984 did indicate that the province's share would be aimed towards the 60 per cent level. Certainly since that time, the standing committee on finance and economic affairs recommended twice, in 1987 and 1988, that the government "increase in a phased program its share of funding to elementary and secondary education to 60 per cent of total expenditures and property

tax should be proportionately decreased through an appropriate tax mechanism." That is from the standing committee.

Obviously, as mentioned at the bottom of the page, there is some need for dialogue between local government and the provincial government to make sure that this can be done, but it is fairly clear where both the government statement was and the recommendations of the standing committee were.

On the next page is a chart, which I am sure you have never seen before, related to the province's share of expenditures. It is clear that they are going down and the point has been made a number of times. I think it is also clear that we have the ability to pay more in Ontario.

Our real difficulty is set out at the top of page 9 and that is with the change in the game. It is fair enough, I think, to disagree, but we have to fight fair. The definition has been changed. We have gone now to 60 per cent of approved costs. We have also thrown in the share of superannuation payments and capital. So the definition is changing. I do not think we are worried about the definition—it could be one or the other—but let's have the same definition so at least we are in the same ballpark. That bothers us.

In the next paragraph, we had a little fight as to whether we would use the Toronto Argonauts or the Ottawa Rough Riders, and then there was a suggestion this morning that we should be the Montreal Alouettes. But there is no question that if you change the rules of how you are going to measure, then it is going to be very difficult to have dialogue and very difficult for us to know what we are talking about and where we are. The fact is that the province's share has gone down. It is not there. It needs to be increased.

At the bottom of page 9 are the ceiling expenditures that Jim mentioned and where they were. The Macdonald commission's recommendation about a \$200 increase would in fact make a huge change in that. Perhaps something like \$400 might be something that this committee might consider.

On page 10, we look at figure 5, which I think is an important figure. It is done on a ratio basis. If you look at the three lines as they relate from 1975 to 1987, it is clear that the total government expenditures have gone up by the highest ratio. The public school board expenditures have gone up by a lower ratio, even though some of the costs have been moved to them. The grants, of course, are at the lowest.

I think it is a point to be made here that there is a difference in how we spend and how we view

the spending. We have had some information and statistics about corporate income tax. For example, this year in the government's papers it shows that the corporate income tax amounts to 12 cents on the dollar, whereas the personal income tax is 31 cents. In the late 1940s, that was a three-to-one ratio the other way. Where has that money gone and where is that money now?

We had some information in the paper the other day. You may recall it was Repap Enterprises, which is not just Ontario-based; it is based in a number of provinces. In looking at their capital sources, they had some \$414 million in tax rebates and tax credits. We understand you cannot claim all of that money, but some of that money is legitimate, I think, from the point of view of where your investment is. We talk about costs of education. We talk about what we have to put out for education. We talk about funding of education. I suggest we should be talking about investment in education. These are investment dollars, not cost dollars.

We have the survey for you in the back, but it is clear that there is support for an increase in the government's share of educational expenditure and it is clear also that the public would support an increase in spending for education. As to our ability to pay, the little chart at the bottom of page 11 certainly shows that from an effort point of view, Ontario is only beaten by British Columbia in lack of effort from the point of view of its ability to look after education.

1110

Mr Jackson: That has changed.

Mr Eaton: It may have changed.

Mr Jackson: BC has increased its—

Mr Eaton: Then we are now last. Thank you; not only a picture but an assist.

Mr Furlong: Why don't you let him make the presentation?

Mr Mahoney: Has this been rehearsed? That's all we want to know.

The Chairman: Just before you go on, I notice we are some 18 minutes into your presentation and you have about half of it yet to cover.

Mr Eaton: I will pick it up.

The Chairman: It is entirely up to you how you wish to spend the time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought it was going well.

Mr Eaton: On page 12, there is a chart that I bring to your attention. It is local government

expenditures on school boards versus the government in total.

I will jump to pages 14 and 15 on the pooling assessment. Jim Head has already mentioned the understandings and the fact that we would not lose a base for public support. I think we understand redistribution. We certainly understand the way the ceilings have gone and some of the increases in the costs to school boards, and certainly pooling is an issue that affects us very much.

I will end on the note of emphasizing our last recommendation on page 16, that the government implement legislation to protect the assessment base of public education from any further encroachment.

I will ask Kim McCulloch to follow up on that.

Mr McCulloch: I will try to be brief. Everybody listen very carefully.

With regard to adult continuing education on the next page, followed with proposals on funding related to the elementary-secondary split, the potential for savings in education through sharing of services between coterminous boards and the recommendations we make on private schools, the recommendations we are making are really few in number and yet they are very important to us. We believe they are constructive in terms of maintaining the quality of education in the secondary system in Ontario and in meeting the expectations of all the people of this province.

Aside from the larger issues of pooling, grant levels and general underfunding, which we have dealt with already, these are quite specific issues that we feel the government could address and should address as we move into the new decade.

On adult continuing education, we all recognize we are moving into a new world. We have an ageing population and more and more people out there are committed to the concept of lifelong learning, yet the provincial level of funding for continuing adult education is at the level, I believe, of \$2,100, whereas it is our feeling, and we have the figures here, that the real costs at this moment are \$3,200 for a credit kind of program and \$2,400 for an interest program.

When those grants, particularly for interest courses, were cut back, I believe about six years ago, somewhere in that neighbourhood, there was a sudden enrolment drop in those kinds of programs, particularly in the north and in francophone communities. People have not recovered from that. The promise was made by the minister, Mr Conway, some time ago that the

true costs, the real costs, the full costs would be covered and that has not occurred.

Moving on to the section on the split, there has been continuous pressure to equalize the per pupil grant between elementary and secondary. We would like to point out very briefly that the fact is that the cost of providing secondary school education is greater than for elementary. The technical programs, the experience of teachers, qualifications of teachers, the subject specialization of a typical secondary school, guidance support, the supplies that are necessary to provide service in technical, commercial and science areas, all of those suggest to us and should suggest to you that the level of grants for secondary be higher. In fact, the gap has closed. The elementary grant was roughly 64 per cent of secondary and at this point in time it is around 76 per cent.

We urge you to consider that and I will throw out this challenge. I think you are all aware of the fact that we have a student retention problem in secondary schools in Ontario. Our government is attempting, it seems, to address that. But if you were to call your local school board and ask what the class size figures are in general level versus advanced level, I think you would find that in most cases those class levels are virtually the same. They might be a little higher for advanced in some cases and in many cases you will find very large general level classes. Maybe it is time the government addressed the problem of class sizes—it has already done it in primary—in the secondary schools, and particularly in the general level and basic level areas.

I have to go faster. The next section has to do with sharing. We believe there was some questioning on this during the earlier presentation today. We feel very strongly that there are areas where savings can be made between coterminous boards. In this section, we have outlined those areas at the bottom of the page and over on page 21 where we feel there really is a potential for savings, particularly on administrative costs and so on. We can reduce the duplication of services out there, but we feel that would require some positive encouragement of school boards and that could be done through some kind of incentive-funding mechanism.

If you can provide a program, for example, in transportation at the total cost of \$1 million for each board, let's say—I am just using a number; I know it is not that high—when two boards provide it, it is \$2 million. If you can combine the service, maybe there is a saving. Maybe it comes out to \$1.5 million. Then why not share the

savings between the province and each of the boards? I would think everybody comes out a winner. Certainly there are areas that are noncontentious. We make that suggestion.

Finally, we support the government's direction to withhold funding from private schools. We applaud that. I would like to point out briefly a newer problem and that is with regard to the goods and services tax proposal of the federal government. The federal government has indicated its intention to exempt private school tuition fees from the general sales tax. To do so we feel is certainly to grant a discriminatory sort of privilege to that segment of society that is most able to pay that tax without hardship. Private schools do not fulfil the same mandate and purpose as public education, and we urge the government to press on to ensure that that exemption is not part of the final package.

With that, Doris, you can continue on. I hope there is a minute or two.

Mrs St Amand: Since 1985, separate school grants and assessments have increased while the public share of grants and assessments has diminished, and this has happened in a disproportionate way. The current plan to provide compensation for residential assessment loss is inadequate. The pooling of commercial and industrial assessment will serve only to make even further stress on the public tax base.

Current grant ceiling levels are unrealistic. What the government says we should be spending represents only 60 per cent of the national experience even though Ontario is Canada's richest province. If the government is to meet its promised objective of funding 60 per cent of the cost of education, these unrealistic ceiling levels must be increased. To relieve the inequities of the public tax burden, OSSTF recommends increased use of the income tax base. To further co-operation and ease the economic strain, OSSTF recommends the introduction of unified school boards. OSSTF supports the government's decision not to advance public funding to private schools.

Now I would like to read our 13 recommendations on page 27 into the record.

The Chairman: I would just mention, Doris, that we have approximately two minutes left and we have four questioners on our list.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This group normally gets given an hour. We have decided not to do that this time for whatever reason. Let us get these recommendations on the record and then be short with our questions, one apiece or whatever.

The Chairman: If that is agreed by the committee, then read your recommendations into Hansard. Then I think probably what we will do is allow one very brief question from each caucus.

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Mrs St Amand: Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

1. That the government increase its share of elementary and secondary expenditure in a measured and continuing manner to a level approaching 60 per cent of the real operating costs to school boards;

2. That the government enter into discussion with the school boards and teacher federations to determine an appropriate method to achieve these objectives;

3. That personal and corporate income tax be the source of any increased funding levels to school boards;

4. That the provincial government guarantee that no public board suffer revenue loss due to the effects of pooling;

5. That the compensation to public boards include the equivalent of any increase in over-the-ceiling expenditure in 1990 or later years that would have been raised through the levy on that portion of the assessment base lost through pooling;

6. That the government implement legislation to protect the assessment base of public education from any further encroachment;

7. That grant levels for adult continuing education reflect the true costs of credit and interest courses and that unless it is established that the following do not reflect such costs accurately, they be set at \$3,200 and \$2,400 respectively and adjusted annually;

8. That program-specific grants at the basic and general level aimed at class-size reduction be phased in at the secondary level;

9. That the Ministry of Education encourage public and separate boards, through incentive funding if necessary, to initiate sharing of services at the local level;

10. That no public funding, direct or indirect, be extended to private and independent schools;

11. That the Ontario government oppose any exemption of tuition fees to private and independent schools from the general sales tax;

12. That the Ontario government continue to oppose the concept of the general sales tax;

13. That the provincial government bring all the pressure it can exert on the federal government to begin immediately to re-establish the

sharing of costs for health and post-secondary education at the 50 per cent level.

The Chairman: Thank you for a very substantive brief. I am sure all members will be reading every page of it because you have offered us so much information. We will start the questioning with Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will just echo those sentiments. It is a very useful document for us as we proceed along. Rather than questioning you at this point on some of the matters within it, maybe I can ask you about something which was included, just to get your comments on it.

Of late, we have been hearing a lot from various groups, boards and people to do with kids with disabilities especially, about the special education grants now being submerged under the general legislative grants. A lot of people have suggested that they need to be lifted out from that for a variety of reasons. I wonder if the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has looked at that at all as a concern.

Mr Head: Yes, we have. As a matter of fact, we have provided the minister with two papers on special education where we address that specifically. We would be happy to provide those for the committee, if you would like them. Of course, the major problem with this is that the grants are apportioned on a basis that generates money to the boards. It goes into a big pot and then it gets distributed out again as to how it is spent. It is very difficult to track once it has gone out there. In a certain sense, we asked for a tracking mechanism before we got into that specific funding again. Essentially, that is where we are at on that.

Needless to say, we do not think there is enough money in the grants, but it is a difficult situation because you can justify special education in a variety of modes and delivery systems. When it is being put into the common pot, there is some justification for the board to do that. What we need is a mechanism to see how much we really need and then how it can be apportioned.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think it would be very useful if we got that document because I agree that it is an accountability question in terms of the use of those funds. Looking at the present statistics that we have received, it is virtually impossible to be able to determine whether boards are doing things appropriately or not. It is virtually impossible to tell one way or the other.

Mr Jackson: I have a brief question. First, it was an excellent brief. I knew it would be well researched. Thank you for the information. I too

would like to address something that was not in your brief and that was something the minister has recently announced with respect to changes in accounting between the two panels. This is the first occasion we have had to ask you for some reaction to that, to interpret, if you have had the time to interpret, what it all means. It is not simply an accounting move. It has other implications as well.

I wonder if you would wish to comment or help the committee better understand that. We have not had a full briefing on it but we at least found out, after you did, that the government was considering this.

Mr Head: I am going to ask Mr McEwen to comment because his committee has been looking at it. I would say initially that we are a bit disturbed by that process, because to date we have always been able to track where money has gone. This will make it extremely difficult. It may be a useful mechanism for the government, but it is certainly going to make it very difficult for committees such as this, for instance, to start to analyse educational funding. That is our concern. John, you might want to add to that.

Mr McEwen: My observations are essentially the same, except I would say that I am appreciative that for the moment there will be two different ceilings, so we can at least see what the government's intention is. But we are very deeply concerned that this will mean a lack of recognition of the additional costs of secondary education. In our brief, we noted that at least one other jurisdiction near us weights students on the basis of whether or not they are elementary or secondary and gives a higher weighting to the secondary. Indeed, if Ontario followed the same practice, the secondary ceilings would be higher than they are now. We are concerned that there may not be adequate recognition of the real costs of secondary education.

Mr Mahoney: Just very briefly, in talking about the over-the-ceiling expenditures, as we have gone around the province, board by board, it has been difficult to get a handle on what they are. I wonder if you, as an umbrella group, might be able to define for us what exactly constitute the over-the-ceiling expenditures.

Mr Head: I will give you a general position. John has done an extensive analysis on a board-by-board basis.

Mr Mahoney: Have you done that in writing?

Mr McEwen: We have an analysis of the 1988 year. We do not have the 1989 year because of

the difficulty in receiving the grant statistics from the provincial government.

Mr Mahoney: Would you be able to provide us with a copy of that analysis?

Mr McEwen: Yes. In that analysis, basically we looked at correlations. We found that there was no correlation between wealth and over-ceiling expenditure, although there was a correlation between the type of board, whether it was separate or public.

Mr Mahoney: Let me be sure you understand my question. What I am trying to understand is, what is actually driving the over-the-ceiling? You have a ceiling that says, "This is what we're funding as the cost of education." Then there is a bunch of costs on top of that which you are saying should be funded more equitably or entirely by the province. What is it that is driving those costs?

Mr Head: Essentially, over-the-ceiling expenditures are local programs. They are meeting the needs of local programs. That is the first thing. That is what the trustees try to deal with when they have to bring in specific programs that will meet the needs of their community. We have always been encouraged in the last 10 years to do that.

It is the very expensive programs, like technical education, commercial education and to some extent special education, where public boards certainly are being asked to deal with varieties of students in manners that not all boards are able to do. John has some other factors that would drive those.

Mr McEwen: I was going to add that previous to 1989, the grant weighting factors recognized geographical difficulties that boards had of providing services, but did not recognize very well those differences that were not driven by the distance between the school board and the CN Tower.

For example, I teach in one of the boards that Mr Villeneuve was referring to earlier, and in that board, which is spending vastly over the ceiling, there is no technical money coming from the province although we have three of the biggest technical schools in the province. I teach without textbooks and without equipment in a declining plant, a plant that is falling apart.

The grant weighting factors or the way in which the money is allocated does not recognize in any adequate sense the real needs of urban Ontario. I think it recognizes in an adequate, not necessarily satisfactory, fashion the needs of northern Ontario.

1130

Mr Mahoney: I would appreciate getting a copy of that report. It could be interesting for the committee.

The Chairman: We would very much appreciate receiving the two reports requested by Mr Johnston and Mr Mahoney. Again, I would like to express on behalf of the committee our appreciation for your very fine brief today and for the assistance you have provided to us in dealing with this very difficult subject.

Mr Head: We would be more than happy to come back, too, because as you can see, there are a lot of questions that could be answered, and a lot of co-operation, I think. We certainly applaud the government's position for going after the federal government on the goods and services tax and the increased transfer payments. If we can help in any way in that area, we certainly would be happy to do so.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for recognizing that we have begun to implement recommendations of the Macdonald commission as well. You are one of the few people who has done that.

The Chairman: The next presentation will be by the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Mr Meaney, could you bring forward your delegation? Good morning. Welcome to our committee as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario. If you would like to begin by introducing your panel for Hansard, we have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we do hope there will be some opportunity within that time period to have questions from members.

DUFFERIN-PEEL ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Meaney: I am Patrick Meaney, the chairperson of the board. Art Steffler, on my left, is a trustee and chairman of the English section. On my right is Bill McInerney, an associate director. We also have Tom Reilly present.

I think you will not wish me to read all this long brief. I will try to walk you through it, touching highlights. When I have done that, I hope there will still be time for questions, and my colleagues will be prepared to bear the burden of those questions.

The Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

Mr Meaney: All right. I will begin by thanking you for giving us the opportunity to discuss educational finance and express our views.

We have built our brief around five concepts: equal opportunity for lifelong learning, adequacy and equity in funding, stewardship in the management of that funding, and accountability for the outcomes, to use Radwanski's term, from the expenditure of those funds.

We have taken for granted as a basic premise for many years in Ontario the goal of equal educational opportunity. Nowadays we have to recognize—and I think we mostly do recognize—that formal education cannot just stop at the end of secondary school. The world is just too complex today and things change too fast. Many adults are stuck in dead-end jobs. We believe the ministry needs to promote its policy on lifelong learning. Lots of schools and boards are well able to service courses for literacy and the completion of diplomas.

For this reason, we welcome the integration of three ministries, that is, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Skills Development, under one minister. We take this as a sign that things are moving in this area.

As to adequacy, here we have a tension between the funds provided for education and the level of service expected. Obviously, you have to tailor one or both of those if you are going to get a match. Clearly, the provision of funds and the level of the services demanded have been out of balance in Ontario for many years. Almost all the boards in the province have exceeded the established ceiling, suggesting the pressures they are under.

Maybe some boards have been extravagant in some ways, but the fact remains that even boards recognized as conservative fiscally have reluctantly exceeded the suggested limits. So we think we need definition here. What is an adequate program, what is an adequate level of service and how much will it take to provide it?

The recent initiative on sharing of commercial assessment brings along with it the promise of raised expenditure ceilings. This will help, but only time will tell if the increases will be adequate to the demand or if the demand can be curtailed to come within the increases.

Traditionally, as you probably know, we favour provincial sharing, but in spite of that we would strongly urge the select committee to support the proposed changes. We believe they will start the process that is required to bring things into balance.

On the matter of local autonomy, this, we all know, is important and highly prized, but while local resources are perceived to be the factor

here—and they are a very big factor—there are others. For instance, one is the practice of the ministry of giving grants for specific purposes. This diminishes local autonomy in two ways: first, by tying the boards, especially boards with small local resources, to the ministry's decisions and, second, by reducing the resources left over for other purposes. We know that for boards deficient in local resources, the autonomy left to them is close to nothing.

If autonomy is a good thing, it should be distributed equitably. The basic block grant should have first priority and new money should be assigned, at least ideally, to these incentive grants. In fact, in the 1989 general legislative grants the incentive grants were funded first and the shortfall, as we say here, in the allocation to the basic grant resulted in boards having to provide a greater local share.

On the matter of equity, we all really know that this has not yet been achieved. Revenue, the bulk of it, comes from two sources, local taxation and provincial grant. Local revenues clearly are not equitably distributed across the province among the boards. You can easily identify them as the assessment-rich and the assessment-poor boards. Theoretically, this fact is compensated for by grants from the province, but the grants are less than adequate and this results in some boards and their students suffering more than others.

On the next page, page 7, you will see a small table we have provided that gives one or two dramatic examples. If you look at the right-hand column, you can see that one board, the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, can spend \$5,681 per student while the Lincoln County Board of Education can only spend \$4,122 and the Metropolitan Separate School Board even less. True, the recent government initiative to redistribute some commercial assessment and to raise ceilings may solve this; it will take a few years of experience to know if in fact it will.

Again, we are not talking merely of a matter of money; it is a matter, to go back to the other item, of autonomy. Poor boards have less autonomy. They simply cannot implement their own programs or their own policy initiatives. They are required to use all of their resources to meet the demands of the ministry rather than the demands or the aspirations of their own ratepayers and their students. Richer boards can do both.

It is worth mentioning that there is an increasing burden being put on the local taxpayer and of course, as everybody says so often, on the poor, both the working and nonworking poor, the old, the fixed-income people and so on. We think

this problem should be addressed seriously with a view to finding a way to alleviate these people's difficulties.

On stewardship, we all know we have an obligation to use the resources that are available to us wisely and well, but there is a perception among some people in the media and the public, to give some examples, that there is duplication in the bureaucracies, that education is overgoverned, that there is too much busing and too many other services, that not enough of the resources actually reach the kids in the classroom, that there are not enough cost-effectiveness analyses done, and that some of those expenditures that caused boards to go over the ceiling might perhaps have been avoided.

1140

We suggest that this select committee take these cautions seriously and have a good look. Possibly some boards need incentives in the matter of stewardship, perhaps controls on expenditures built into the funding system. We know this sounds as if we are asking for more centralization, and we are not, but there should be a balance—and again I am back to the word “balance”—between autonomy and licence. We believe there should be parameters, a framework, in effect, within which there would be freedom of action.

On the matter of accountability, we favour accountability both for the quality of the daily experience provided for the students as they learn, and learn to learn, and the degree of mastery they have attained at the end. We have been speaking already of fiscal responsibility; we think there should also be accountings for the quality of the programming and for the attainment of the students. It is true that provincial reviews appear to be developing in this direction and we do support this development.

Parents, of course, wish to have realistic information on their children's progress. We are awaiting ministry proposals on benchmarks and suggestions regarding reporting on student achievement.

We want to comment on the general legislative grants regulation. This is intended to be the main control mechanism for achieving adequacy and equity. It has not been working. In recent years, as I have already mentioned, there have been targeted grants and special grants to meet particular pressures. These distort the system. They are often given at a rate of 100 per cent regardless of the local wealth or poverty of the boards. They reduce resources that are available for the general grant and they tend to lead, force,

entice boards into expenditures that keep on going when the grants themselves have ceased.

What we suggest is that grants paid through this regulation should be in inverse proportion between local revenue and the provincial grants. Of course, as the ceiling is raised, provincial grants also should be raised, at least proportionately.

On capital grants, as we have said so many times elsewhere, they are not adequate to meet the needs of the new school buildings or the renovations desperately required for older schools. The greater Toronto area alone could absorb all the capital funds currently provided by the province. Also, the schools that do get built cannot be equipped adequately on the current allowance for furniture and equipment.

We would like to put forward certain ideas. For instance, schools could form part of a complex with libraries, recreation centres and medical centres, within which uses of the various parts could change as the needs change. Various ministries could co-operate with each other as they use their capital funds so that the money available could be used economically in an optimum way. Lease-back areas need a good close look, with much better grant arrangements than at present.

Development must be tied to the provision of infrastructure. Schools are an essential part of infrastructure. We believe that development should not proceed unless the infrastructure can be provided as the development occurs, and not years afterwards with a big lag.

Transportation is a huge item in expenditure. Our board alone, Dufferin-Peel, spends \$14 million annually on this one. Many people have come to question the educational effectiveness of this spending. We think this is one area where provincial guidelines would be helpful to us; that is, regarding the levels of service that would be regarded as standard or regular. We know this is a diverse province and there would have to be exceptions and variations because of our geography.

It is worth looking at a few things, for instance: separate provisions for urban grants and rural grants in transportation; incentives for boards to use the regular public transport, that is, of course, in urban areas, and provincial guidelines such as, for instance, that all students living closer than a mile walk to school unless there is some clearly recognized safety hazard. I regard this last one as very significant: better funding for crossing guards, and possibly less for transporta-

tion. We think those items are worth taking a good look at.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If I want to get into something after politics, that is a good one.

Mr Villeneuve: Can you handle it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: With training.

Mr Meaney: Cash flow interest cost is eating up education money. We would like to see the holdback reduced to two per cent from seven and the cash flow throughout the year at a rate high enough to meet the expenditures. It should be paid—this sounds like common sense—in twelve equal instalments starting in January. The estimates of enrolments should be changed. They are obviously not appropriate for the growth boards at present. The payments should be made on the basis of at least the current enrolments or the projected ones, but not on out-of-date figures. We would like to mention that everything we say is based on the current basic method used for funding in Ontario.

Our eyes are not closed to radical changes provided there is equity. Take, for instance, full funding by the province. It would be easier if we used that to provide equity. It would be simpler and it would be more easily controllable. The danger, of course, would be to local autonomy, which, as I say, we prize highly. There could be some assigned power, some, as it were, constitution for each party. At the other end there is the token system. That too has problems, although these problems have been addressed in other jurisdictions, especially in the United Kingdom. There are other alternatives. What matters in considering all these are the firm goals and the existence of equity, adequacy and quality.

Our recommendations are on the next page. If you wish, I will read them, but if not, it might be better to get on to the questions at hand. What do you think, Madam Chairman?

The Chairman: I think you have time to read them. I think we have 12 minutes left and we have three questioners, but it probably will not take long to read.

Mr Meaney: I will go quickly through them. We recommend that the ministry take further steps to promote the concept of lifelong learning—I mentioned at the beginning that the select committee recommend a mechanism for determining what constitutes an adequate program; that the committee support the ministry's recent initiatives to raise ceilings and to share undesignated commercial equipment between co-terminous boards; that the committee study the establishment of provincial standards in some

areas of expenditure and limits in some areas; that further support be given to the development of provincial reviews of programs and student attainment along the lines already established.

We recommend that capital grants for the building of new schools and the renovations of older schools be increased further and that innovative methods such as some of those we have mentioned for financing school construction be explored; that the allowance for furniture and equipment for new schools be increased substantially; that the cash flow be equalized over the year and the holdbacks reduced, and finally that grants be realistically based on the current enrolments.

Those suggestions, as you can see, are a distillation of the suggestions we have made in the paper. I would like to close by thanking you again for the opportunity and also for the valuable work you are doing here for education in the province.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation today, and for précising it so we do have time for members' questions.

Mr Mahoney: On page 11, item 3, you state that there has been a forcing of boards into expenditures which continue after the grants have ceased. Are you referring to over-ceiling expenditures? Is that specifically what you mean?

Mr Meaney: I think I will refer that to Mr McNerney on the point you mentioned, over-ceiling expenditures, because it is a little technical for me.

Mr Mahoney: It is a two-part question. The second part is the same question I asked of the previous delegation with regard to what is driving over-ceiling expenditures, if you could give me your perspective on that.

1150

Mr McNerney: Some of these grants are in both categories, over and within ceilings. Some of the examples—one at least I can think of immediately is the equal opportunity officer grants we were receiving a couple of years ago. They tend to decrease, but once you establish the program you continue to have to run it.

Mr Mahoney: The second part is, what is driving the over-ceiling grants? You have given me one example, I guess, but is there some major factor? It was suggested by the OSSTF that the main factor is local board decisions on programs. Is that in fact what is driving over-ceiling, or is there something else?

Mr McInerney: Certainly to some extent that is true, and I would guess that some of the local expectations that have been raised over the years have driven that as well; things such as, for example, OSSTF mentioned the special education grants which have now been rolled into the general grants. But when I was superintendent of special services with our board, certainly Bill 82 raised the expectations of the community, I found, far beyond the level at which the grants could meet the demands in the way of mainstreaming and so forth.

I think another thing that drives it is local expectations. People really do feel that they have the right to busing closer, they have the right to every service and so on. I am not sure if this relates to it or not, but I was just having a discussion yesterday with our director around the fact that certain things which are occurring in other ministries, like the Ministry of Community and Social Services, where services for children are not adequate in our area, result in the demand for us to provide additional services which cannot be provided by others in the way of mental health services for children, etc. We cannot see children not have those services, and if they cannot be provided by others, we are looked to by parents to provide.

Mr Mahoney: You made some really excellent suggestions. The complex concept is one that has been talked about peripherally in many cases, but I think it is something we have to move towards.

In addition to that, I had a public meeting at All Saints School last night on some of the concerns those folks have. The issue came forward, and I would be interested in your response—the committee may be as well—that we are using too much land for our schools, that we are building single-storey, spread-out structures. This is coming from the community, saying why do we not reduce our overall costs by taking five acres instead of seven or four instead of seven, and why do we not build two-storey buildings. In combining that idea with your complex idea, do you see any merit to that?

Mr Meaney: Certainly we could see that in a complex, but this is the same community where one of the councils is suing us because we have too many portables on our grounds. We have run out of room for one-storey portables. We just have to have room—

Mr Mahoney: It is only six portables. They are not suing you for that.

Mr Meaney: I do not mean on that one, but in a school where the portables are not properly

distributed. We are between a rock and a hard wall in that kind of case. You need land for playgrounds and for other purposes, and where we can, as you know, we put our schools next to parks and other public open spaces. This helps, but problems are arising there with regard to vandalism and so forth, and hanging out in the parks. In general, I do not think we ought to cut down our breathing spaces, either for the sake of the community or for the sake of the kids. We do have certain two-storey buildings. Lots of them. I do not think in elementary schools it is suitable.

Mr McInerney: I might comment that I am not sure in Dufferin-Peel how many recent one-storey buildings we have built, but we opened four elementary schools this year and all of them are two-storey. The secondary schools we are planning are two and three storeys high in every case. In one or two cases they are three storeys high.

I do not think we have any on the drawing boards, nor have we the last number of years that I am aware of, that are single-storey buildings. We still need a minimal amount of space, around seven acres or thereabouts for an elementary school, we believe, and certainly 15 acres for a secondary school to get all the facilities that are part of the program today on the site.

Mr Meaney: I would also add that we have had problems where we do not have enough land. We have lots of examples of that. The kids tend to spill out into the neighbouring streets and we have complaints from the neighbourhood on that. But people who live in other places would not know about that.

Mr Mahoney: One final quick question: Why do you think you need provincial guidelines to establish the busing policies and what are your board's policies with regard to distance?

Mr Meaney: We mention in here there is a whipsaw effect: If somebody has it someplace else you have to have it and what you have is used to go someplace else. Local political pressures tend to cause satisfaction of those demands, whereas if you had a standard to refer to rather than have to create your own as you go along, you could avoid that constant raising of the waters.

Mr Jackson: It is like Sunday shopping.

Mr Mahoney: We believe in local autonomy. We have proved that time and again.

Mr Villeneuve: You are getting a good argument against it.

Mr Mahoney: One of the deputants made a suggestion that was great, that we drive kids to

within one mile of the school and then let them off the bus.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They did that to me all the time.

Mr Mahoney: You were kicked off the bus. That was different.

Mrs O'Neill: You were good for eight miles every day.

Mr Meaney: I would emphasize the balance concept with regard to local autonomy. We do want local autonomy, but there should be a balance between all interests.

Mr Villeneuve: You have heard that before, have you not, Steve?

Mr Mahoney: I could go on, but I do not want to at this stage.

The Chairman: That is good.

Mr Mahoney: I am going to adopt Yvonne's policy of stopping before I get into trouble.

The Chairman: I am glad you do not want to go on because I was just about to cut you off.

Mr Mahoney: You were not.

The Chairman: I was. Mr Johnston?

Mr R. F. Johnston: This has been a very stimulating brief. Some of the briefs we received have been stimulating because they have been so controversial, but this one raises a whole bunch of ideas in areas for us to look at. They are very useful and we cannot tell you how much we appreciate that.

The committee spent a lot of time in its first report dealing with the notion of shared responsibilities in terms of the school system and yet, come to think of it, we have not talked very much at all in this period of time about structural change that could accommodate that. That is a very useful initiative.

I think we do need to look very seriously, before we finish up, at what we should be recommending on transportation and we should indeed be looking at some other provincial models. On the example of guidelines you are raising, one of the things that has not been raised is that our system is almost entirely privatized, unlike most of the other provinces and even unlike the United States at this stage.

We should really, I think, in terms of financial accountability, etc, be looking at that as an issue as well. Perhaps in the next coming little while we can start to gather that kind of material so that we can probably make recommendations along the lines of process recommendations that you have been suggesting.

The one that has really jumped out at me, especially coming from a board, as it does, is this notion that we should maybe be looking at other ways of funding in large terms and that the questions of local accountability do not need to be directly related to the dollars involved, but to some sort of constitutional sharing and guarantee.

It seems to me that we have a bizarre mix at the moment where we have moneys being raised at both levels and the local electorate not knowing who is responsible for which: what actual mandatory things you are doing that the government is forcing you to do, what things are your own adaptation of what the government is asking you to do and what are things that you are doing on top of what the government is asking you to do.

There is no real accountability in terms of the fiscal responsibility, but if there were more of a move towards constitutionalizing the responsibilities and then perhaps trying to get some of that money tied to it, it would be a very interesting thing for us to look at. We have had a number of very interesting documents provided to us by research, and one of the things in them we have not really looked at is the Quebec model, where 90 per cent plus is paid for by the province, and what the effects on that accountability are in those areas.

Do the local boards feel like they are accountable to their electorate or do they feel that they are tokens and not really serving a democratic process? Are the turnouts in their elections any more abysmal than ours are in terms of school board elections, etc? I think we really do need to look at that as a committee. It is a hard thing for a board to come and advocate because you are dealing with the reality that you have laid out so well for us. I appreciate the fact that you are open to us looking at that.

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Mr Meaney: Yes, we do think this should be looked at, but we are not necessarily advocating it. We have an open mind.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I appreciate it very much. I thought it was very stimulating.

Mrs O'Neill: I like many of the ideas here and I agree with Mr Johnston that they certainly have to be considered and hopefully some worked upon.

I would like to ask you three very brief questions. The elementary and secondary schools that you are building, two and three storeys, do they all include elevators?

Mr Meaney: I believe they do.

Mr McInerney: In the latest schools that we have been building we have been putting elevators in each one.

Mrs O'Neill: Is that acceptable in the grant plan, or do you have to—

Mr McInerney: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: The next one is you are talking about using the regular transit lines and incentives for that. Is your board doing that in any proportion, like 50 per cent or something to that effect?

Mr Meaney: I am not sure of the proportion in the Brampton area. I think it is less than 50 per cent.

Mr McInerney: Yes. We just began this fall introducing at the secondary level the use of public transit, partly because the busing systems in Mississauga and Brampton, our two largest municipalities, have up to this time not really lent themselves to that sort of thing. They have been hub systems, where several transfers might have to be taken. But the Brampton transit authority has in fact moved in that direction to help us with special routes and so forth. It made it possible for us to introduce, and I might say rather smoothly, we are very pleased, the first wave of what we see as a move in that direction.

Mrs O'Neill: So you are buying bus passes, which are useful seven days a week, for the students?

Mr McInerney: Not seven days, five days a week during certain hours, from a certain hour to a certain hour, depending on school hours.

Mrs O'Neill: One other item that no one else has mentioned, and we have been sitting the entire week, is the crossing guards. That I know has always been a difficulty for school boards, particularly in any kind of a metropolitan area. Do your municipalities contribute there and pay fully, or are you taking some of that out of your operating grants?

Mr Meaney: No, we have a number of municipalities—perhaps I am not up to date on all of them, but certainly the biggest one. I used to sit on the safety council for some years and I know that that is totally the municipality. There is difficulty in finding the money. We have some very complicated crossings in our jurisdiction, and I know of one area where there were two or three crossing guards needed to control one area. It seems to make sense to put money into that sort of thing, rather than picking kids up almost door to door. I find it ludicrous and have done down

the years to bus kids to avoid them having to walk and then having them spend time in the gym to maintain their muscle tone.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wonder why you would suggest us putting money from education into crossing guards, when, as far as I know, generally across the province, boards have tried to keep that in the municipal arena, simply because of the personnel who are involved and the supervisors that go along. I am wondering if I am hearing you correctly, that you would like to get some operating grants for guards or not.

Mr Meaney: The answer there is that we are looking at the thing in a broader sense, in the sense of the benefits and costs to the taxpayer and to the students, rather than what particular pocket they come out of. We think money should be spent more in that direction and less in the other, but the details of which of the taxpayers' pockets it comes from are not involved.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for clarifying that.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mrs O'Neill, and thank you, Mr Meaney, and to your colleagues, for your presentation today. It has been very helpful.

Mr Meaney: Thank you again.

The Chairman: Our next delegation is the Metropolitan Toronto School Board. Welcome. We do have four seats right at the front and then we have one on the side here and two on the side there. I understand you have seven presenters. We shall not take it as a sign of your political allegiance where you sit.

Mr Maxted: I would also say the same for my tie.

The Chairman: I think you and Mr Silipo have the same accoutrements today, so I do not know if that is a political statement or not.

Mr Jackson: It is okay. When I think of Liberals, I see red too.

The Chairman: Welcome again to our committee. We look forward to hearing your presentation today. As the largest board in Ontario, I am sure you have very valuable insight to share with us, and I say that not as a Metro member present but as chair of the committee on behalf of committee members. Ms Waese, perhaps you would like to introduce the members of your delegation for the benefit of Hansard and the members.

METROPOLITAN TORONTO SCHOOL BOARD

Ms Waese: I would very much like to thank you and the members of the select committee on

education for giving us this opportunity to present to you the views of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board on the future of education in Ontario relating to equity, accountability and adequacy of the funding of education.

I am Mae Waese. I am chair of the Metro school board. Present with me this morning are members of the committee of board chairmen of the Metro school board. On my left, I would like to introduce Anne Ladouceur, president of le Conseil des écoles françaises de la communauté urbaine de Toronto, the French school board. Seated next to her is Ken Maxted, chairman of the East York Board of Education. To my immediate right is Tony Silipo, chair of the Toronto Board of Education. Next to him is Mary Raymond, chair of the Etobicoke Board of Education. To my further right, on the side here, is John Filion, chair of the North York Board of Education. Next to him is Dianne Williams, chair of the Scarborough Board of Education.

The Chairman: Please proceed whenever you are ready. We have allocated 30 minutes of presentation time and we do hope there will be a little bit of time at the end for members' questions.

Ms Waese: We will be sharing our presentation with you. We have divided up the presentation into four areas which will be identified as the people begin to speak.

We represent the eight public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto which comprise the Metro federation under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board. This federation forms the two-tiered system of educational governance which is unique to Metro Toronto.

The public school boards in Metro provide educational programs for 257,000 students who represent 20 per cent, or one in every five of the public school pupils in Ontario. We employ some 15,000 teachers and over 10,000 support personnel. Our net budget in 1989 is \$1,678,000,000, a most significant material contribution supporting the education of public school pupils in Metro Toronto.

This support enables the eight public school boards in Metro to offer an academic program which meets the need of each student in our systems. In a complex metropolis of 2.5 million people, the demands for quality of academic standards are high, the requests for a variety of programs cover the entire spectrum and the objective to meet individual expectations of each student is a top priority.

The Metro federation of eight public school boards is based upon the principle of equality of

educational opportunity for all pupils in our system. When the Metro school board was created in 1954, it was stated that the educational resources of the entire community should be shared to ensure equality of educational opportunity for each child, regardless of the community in which he or she lives in Metro. The public school taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto contribute over \$1.6 billion to make that lofty objective possible. The public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto strive to make equality of educational opportunity a reality.

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Mr Silipo: I have the dubious pleasure of talking to you a little about the inadequacy of the provincial share of the cost of education in Metropolitan Toronto. In 1975, the provincial share of the total cost of education in Ontario was 61 per cent. By 1988, this share had dropped to 48 per cent. In the same period in Metropolitan Toronto, however, the reduction of the share of educational costs by the province has been even more dramatic. In 1975, the province contributed approximately 35 per cent, or more than one third, of the cost of public education in Metropolitan Toronto. This year, 1989, the provincial government contributes nothing—zero—to support public education in Metro. In other words, the entire cost of public education in Metro—\$1.678 billion—is borne entirely by the public school property taxpayers in Metropolitan Toronto.

We would remind the select committee that the Macdonald commission in its Report of the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario challenged the "government of Ontario to affirm its financial commitment toward the funding of education and that it (the government) move toward contribution of 60 per cent of the approved costs."

If the average provincial grant rate should ever reach the recommended level of 60 per cent, public school boards in Metro do not expect their system to be supported at the average level because of the comparative wealth of our community. But surely it is not too much to expect that the government of Ontario will make some contribution towards the cost of public education in Metro and avoid having the entire financial burden carried by the property taxpayer in Metropolitan Toronto. Nor, we believe, should the artificial manipulation of the assessment base through pooling be used to give the appearance that suddenly educational grants start to flow to Metropolitan Toronto.

There are many legitimate areas which the government should examine to enhance grant support to the Metro area, and we would like to highlight a few of these. Surely the inadequacy of the grant ceilings must be patently obvious when 90 per cent of the school boards in Ontario exceed the grant ceilings. The grant plan is in desperate need of reform when it recognizes less than two thirds of the cost of educating a pupil in Metropolitan Toronto.

The great need for special education programs and compensatory education in a large urban area like Metropolitan Toronto is given inadequate recognition in the special education factors and the grant plan. They too require improvement.

The high transportation cost incurred in Metro to bring thousands of special education pupils to their special schools and to their special education programs are not adequately recognized. Recognition must be given in a more tangible way to programs mounted for refugees and new Canadians. The support for tens of thousands of adult and continuing education students must be realistic if we are to make lifelong learning a reality.

Mr Maxted: The additional costs of mandated programs and services: The Metropolitan Toronto School Board is particularly concerned about the additional cost burden which is placed upon our fiscal resources by the ad hoc introduction of new programs and services by the Ministry of Education or the imposition of new obligations by the provincial and federal governments, and 1989 is a vintage year.

We are actively engaged in meeting the heavy responsibility of reducing class sizes in grades 1 and 2 to 20 to 1 to reach that objective announced during the last provincial election campaign. Suddenly, this spring, the speech from the throne unveiled the government's objective of implementing all-day senior kindergartens. We are not aware of any prior consultation regarding this significant pedagogical innovation with members of the educational community, either professional or political.

The Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon) of this province announced the employer health levy or payroll tax for employee health insurance, which affects every school board. The federal government continues to implement immigration and refugee policies which have dramatic impacts upon the boards of education regarding the provision of services to new Canadians in Metropolitan Toronto.

These unilateral actions have placed an undue burden upon the public school ratepayers in

Metro. We calculate that it has been, and will be, necessary to hire 270 additional teachers to meet the class size obligations in grades 1 and 2. In teachers' salaries alone, this action will cost the Metropolitan Toronto public school taxpayers \$13 million per year.

Mme Ladouceur : Cette année, plus de 17 000 élèves fréquentent les jardins d'enfants dans les écoles publiques de la communauté urbaine de Toronto. En annonçant son intention d'ouvrir des jardins à temps plein, le gouvernement a créé des attentes sans toutefois prévoir les moyens de répondre à ces attentes.

Quel sera l'effet de cette décision sur les garderies? Les conseils scolaires devront-ils fournir des programmes et des espaces pour les garderies? Le gouvernement a-t-il l'intention d'effectuer un transfert de fonds du ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires aux conseils scolaires, afin de reconnaître les coûts supplémentaires? La politique du gouvernement vise à ouvrir des jardins d'enfants à plein temps seulement là où l'espace est disponible. Cette politique serait-elle discriminatoire? Où allons-nous trouver les enseignantes qualifiées à une époque déjà marquée par une pénurie d'enseignants?

The payroll tax for health insurance will cost the public school taxpayers an additional \$13.4 million in 1990. This is the added burden placed upon our ratepayers above the \$11.5 million we already pay through shared costs of OHIP premiums with our employees.

Mr Maxted: The immigration policies of the federal government have enabled thousands of immigrants and refugees to seek new lives in this country. The majority of these newcomers settled in Ontario and a vast majority of those established their homes in Metropolitan Toronto. We welcome these new citizens and we feel enriched by their presence, but, Madam Chairman, in the school year 1988-89 in Metropolitan Toronto, 680 teachers of English as a second language were allocated to provide basic language instruction. As immigrant registration has almost tripled between 1986 and 1988, 390 teachers were added in the last two years to accommodate this increase, an additional expense of over \$16 million.

Mme Ladouceur : Où est le financement de la part du gouvernement fédéral destiné à ces programmes, qui résultent des initiatives fédérales? Il n'y en a pas. Où se trouvent les subventions provinciales qui ont pour but la réduction de l'effectif des classes de première et de deuxième années? Il n'y en a aucune. D'où

vient l'appui financier du gouvernement provincial en ce qui concerne l'impôt sur le salaire visant l'assurance-santé? Il n'existe pas du tout.

If another level of government mandates services or programs, then it should be the responsibility of that level of government to share, on significant terms and a continuing basis, in the cost of that mandated program. It is not appropriate to mandate a program and provide funding for the first year or two of the program and then suddenly have the support dollars disappear by the sleight of hand of "folding them in" to the existing grants.

I repeat that in 1989 the entire cost of public education in Metro was borne entirely by the public school ratepayers in Metropolitan Toronto.

Mrs Raymond: Pooling of assessment, pooling revisited, I guess: As this committee must know, in its response to the report of the Macdonald commission and on other occasions, the Metropolitan Toronto School Board has expressed its opposition to the concept of the pooling of industrial and commercial assessment.

However, the 1989 Ontario budget speech included an announcement of the introduction in 1990 of a system of coterminous sharing of local education revenues derived from business partnerships, publicly traded corporations and telephone and telegraph companies, to be phased in over a six-year period. An amount of \$165 million is to be added to base operating grants by the government to ensure, supposedly, that the public school system, on a province-wide basis, will not suffer. The government has admitted, however, that some boards may experience a loss in revenue, but it is proposed that these boards will be compensated. In fact, an impact study prepared by officials of the Ministry of Education indicates that 13 public school boards will suffer a loss of approximately \$39 million over the six-year phase-in period. Of this amount, \$24.5 million will be lost by the Metropolitan Toronto public school system.

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For reasons I will point out, we must express very grave doubts as to the adequacy of the proposed compensation. First, there is an apparent discrepancy of \$24 million between the amount of \$180 million provided for by the Treasurer in the 1989 budget and the estimated requirement of \$240 million, that is, the \$165 million for the increased ceilings and \$39 million to cover losses.

The estimates of the effect of pooling have been made on the basis of the 1987 assessment roll for 1988 taxes. Even if compensation is based on 1989 school board budgets, it will not take into account the inevitable increases in board spending in 1990 or the considerable impact of inflation during a six-year phase-in. We have been informed that any growth in our assessment base during the phase-in period will diminish the level of compensation.

No allowance has been made for compensation, apparently because of lack of adequate data, for losses arising from the rule changes affecting assessments of business partnerships. Nor will the compensation provision deal with the problem that the very large sums needed to be raised annually for extraordinary expenditures, such as transportation, new schools, renovations and replacements and furniture and equipment, will be raised from a reduced tax base. No provisions have been made for that compensation to continue after the sixth year.

Pooling provides separate school boards with the opportunity to lower mill rates to attract additional residential and farm assessment which will, in turn, generate a higher proportion of commercial and industrial assessment, a vicious circle operating to erode the public school funding base.

According to Ministry of Education data, the cost of separate school extension, excluding capital allocations, amounted to \$193.6 million in 1988 and \$201.3 million in 1989. I must say that this is a far cry from the original estimate of the Davis government of \$40 million.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just a ballpark figure, you know.

Mrs Raymond: Big ballpark, SkyDome.

Mr Maxted: With the roof open.

Mrs Williams: I would like to address the subject of new pupil spaces and the renovation and replacement of school buildings.

Each spring the Ministry of Education announces its capital allocations for the construction of new schools and additions to existing schools. In recent years, these allocations have been met with choruses of complaints from various school boards surrounding the Metropolitan Toronto area. They state that the allocations have simply been inadequate to meet the demands for new pupil spaces in these burgeoning communities.

The need for new pupil spaces is not confined to the dormitory neighbourhoods surrounding Metropolitan Toronto. There are undeveloped tracts of land in Metropolitan Toronto, particu-

larly in Scarborough where subdivisions are springing up and new students and their parents are appearing to register in our schools. Redevelopment is proceeding apace throughout Metro and this September we have registered more students than were in our schools one year ago. Enrolment decline has bottomed out in the public school system in Metropolitan Toronto. As an aside, Dr Jackson, in the report of the Commission on Declining School Enrolment, was right. In order to solve our accommodation problems, we currently have 630 portables in use throughout the eight public school boards in Metro.

We would like to add our voices to that chorus of complaint, not only for the new pupil spaces but for the government of this province to recognize the absolute necessity to begin a comprehensive program of renovation and replacement of ageing school buildings by providing capital allocations for renovation and replacement.

The eight school boards in Metropolitan Toronto operate some 550 schools. Many of these buildings are more than 50 years old; some of them border on 75. The age at which the ministry grant plan accepts that a school board building is fully depreciated is 50 years. It is essential that a planned renovation and replacement program be implemented. If we were to replace 10 schools a year, the most elementary mathematical calculation reveals the enormity of replacing 550 schools: The one we built today would be 50 years old when we got finished. And yet, we must begin this task if we are to maintain quality schools in the urban core of this metropolis.

We believe that Metropolitan Toronto has avoided the social problems and physical blight which have grown in many large cities in North America by providing and maintaining a viable school system in the city core, yet the Ministry of Education has not provided capital allocations for renovation and replacement.

Mr Filion: In the 1989 budget, the trustees of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board committed their school board to begin a program of renovation and replacement. A three-year program which requires an average of \$17 million per year, for a total of \$52 million, was approved, and we have begun this program which will result in the renovation and replacement of 11 elementary schools and four secondary schools. The entire cost of this program is borne by the public school taxpayers, without any capital allocation from the provincial government. We urge the government to join with us

and other school boards in a renovation and replacement program of ageing school facilities.

Let me clear up a popular misconception regarding capital allocations of the ministry. The widely held belief is that when the ministry announces an allocation of, for example, \$10 million to build a new high school, that \$10 million will actually flow to the particular school board. This is not the case. The allocation of \$10 million merely approves that sum which will flow to the school board at the capital grant rate of that board. In Metro, the capital grant rate is approximately 37.5 per cent for secondary schools. Therefore, to use the hypothetical \$10 million, which is low—for calculation purposes, the actual amount would probably be double that—in Metro the capital grant rate is approximately 37.5, as I said; therefore, the Metro school board would receive an actual grant of \$3.75 million when the ministry announced an allocation of \$10 million. The remaining \$6.25 million to construct a new school would have to be raised by the public school ratepayers of Metro. This procedure applies to each school board in the province at the particular capital grant rate calculated for that board.

The Metro school boards have made a tangible commitment to the well-planned renovation and replacement program of older school buildings. We believe it is essential that the Ministry of Education participate with us in a tangible way to ensure that generations of future students will have adequate schools in which to learn.

Ms Waese: We, the committee of board chairmen of the eight public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto, appreciate the opportunity to discuss with your committee some of our major concerns regarding the financing of education in this province.

You will appreciate, I am sure, that we could have gone on at length to share with you our concerns about the fiscal relationships between the Ministry of Education and the public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto. May I conclude with one statement? The trustees of the eight public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto are committed to providing a viable educational program for every child in our systems. We urge the provincial government to join with us in a tangible fiscal partnership to share some of the responsibilities that accompany these goals.

The partnership must not only share the responsibility of providing quality of education to each child. A successful partnership will enjoy the benefits of quality in the future social structure of Metropolitan Toronto, which will be

enhanced by knowledgeable, tolerant, thoughtful, understanding citizens of the 21st century.

That concludes our presentation.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. I do appreciate the fact you have left some time for questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As we have been going around the province, of course many a stone has been cast at the Metro area, much to the relish of some members, I am sure, but to the pain of others of us. There are a couple of things I would like to focus on, if I might, in terms of some of those things, but first I would like to say that I think this was a well-done brief in terms of laying out the depth of the problem that is there. If there is a consistency across the province, it is that no matter where you are, one way or another this system just does not seem to be working in any way that measures the kinds of things we have been talking about: the three categories of adequacy, equity and accountability.

1230

One of the things that keeps coming up is the overceiling expenditure. Just this morning we received a brief that indicates Toronto—I am not sure if this is city-wide or Metro-wide; you can let me know that—is at around \$5,725 per student as compared with \$3,250 of ceiling. This last year, the projection for this next year is that we will be going up about \$500 million dollars in overceiling expenditures across the province.

The question that always comes up regularly by members now is what is driving this. Is it, as some people have been telling us, new programs that are board-initiative and board-autonomy kinds of decisions? Is it a failure to pass through dollars for a basic grant, which then means you are falling behind inflation at that level and that is why there is an exponential growth in these past few years, especially of overceiling? What is it?

I wonder if you can tell us, and maybe through us the rest of the province, why it is that Metro is spending those kinds of dollars at the moment in comparison with—they always give us Lincoln and other areas that are much closer to the ceiling level, although 95 per cent or 96 per cent of the boards are overceiling.

Ms Waese: I think you started to identify for us some of the factors that drive our budget, but I will call on our director, Mr Brown, to be a little more specific. I think he could probably focus in very clearly for you.

Mr Brown: I am Charles Brown, the director and secretary-treasurer of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board.

I can answer Mr Johnston's question in a single word. Yes, all the factors drive it. There is not one single factor that is driving the over-the-ceiling expenditure levels, but there are many, many factors in the organization of schools. For example, one factor alone that I quote is the increasing average salary for teachers that is paid not only in our school boards but in other school boards right across the province.

This has become exacerbated in the last few years because due to declining enrolment we have not been replenished with younger, inexperienced teachers at lower salaries at the bottom level. The age of our teaching population has grown each year and their experience has grown and therefore their average salary has grown extremely rapidly. We now calculate the average salary of secondary school teachers in Metro at \$50,000 a year. That is but one factor that is driving up the whole cost of education much more rapidly.

There are the special programs, the very sophisticated special education programs that we have developed in Metro to meet the needs of a large metropolitan community, as we say in the brief. For example, we provide our own program for the blind in Metro. Students who are blind within Metro can reside at home and participate in our classes in that regard. There are many other examples in that area.

I do not think a board can single out the single factors, but there is a wide spectrum that is driving these costs right up. What has happened is that the ceilings have not matched the exponential costs of education in that regard.

Ms Waese: I would just add one statement to that because it is in here. If you look at what is happening to us in 1989 in terms of the payroll tax, health, class size, the ceiling and pay equity. In one year—I was stunned by what it is costing us to have the consultants, which has nothing to do in Metropolitan Toronto with what the pay equity program—I am not putting any value judgement on the program; I think its time has come.

The costs are just exorbitant, none of which will even begin to be reflected in one year. Metro has absolutely no bearing whatsoever in terms of any support, but the costs and the percentages before we even begin to negotiate with our teachers—living in Metropolitan Toronto, by the way, and negotiating a contract in Metro has a delight all its own.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it possible, though, for you to collect for us some kind of analysis of it so we can see the factors and the weight of the various factors?

Ms Waese: I would be more than pleased to make sure the members of your committee receive copies so that we can be very specific and give you a very clear—

Mr R. F. Johnston: If it is not too difficult; it would be useful to us, I think.

Ms Waese: I am sure it would be.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are very hard terms, to understand all the various aspects.

Mr Brown: We will forward that to you and you can distribute it to each member of your committee.

The Chairman: That would be very helpful.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will tell you as well that on the pooling matter you raised, the extra cost factor was raised with us in Sudbury yesterday and we have asked for a further update from the ministry in its estimates. We will throw into the pot some of the extra things you have raised that have not been raised with us by other groups at this point.

I have one small question and one tough one. I will save the tough one for the end, of course. The small one is that we have learned in other areas that the incentive to reduce class size that has been provided by the provincial government at the moment has caused some boards to raise the sizes of their classes in grades 3 through 8. I am wondering if that is uniformly happening through the boards of Metro or what the situation is.

Ms Waese: I will respond initially and then perhaps the other members would wish to contribute. I have been able to speak with various board chairmen and the indication appears to be that in order to meet the time line—I think you are well aware of the implications of space; when you lower class size, you must put these kids somewhere else with teachers—we are experiencing higher class sizes in the junior part of our program, grades 4, 5 and 6 in particular and some spillover in grade 3.

Would anyone else like to add to that?

Mr Brown: From a staff point of view, the advisory council of directors in Metropolitan Toronto, the directors of the eight boards in Metro, met on Tuesday of this week and they expressed grave concerns about the size of classes, particularly in grades 4, 5 and 6. In the kindergarten to grade 6 elementary school, they mandated 1 to 20 and the attempts to reach that are putting tremendous pressure on the junior division. The whole balance of quality education that is achieved theoretically by lower class size in grade 1 is being challenged or eroded by the

very significant increases in class sizes being forced upon school organizations by grades 4, 5 and 6.

The other problem is that when you have a mandated class size of 20 to one on a system-wide average and you find a school that is 22 to 1, parental expectations are there for 20 to 1 in that school. Although we know what the overall objective is on a system-wide average, nevertheless the local expectations are causing problems in that particular area.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That leads neatly into my final point, which is in terms of questions of accountability. As I have said many times in the committee, I find it impossible to understand how an elector is supposed to know who is accountable for what these days. Even if it is an overceiling amount that you decide upon, it may be something you have been forced into because of lack of funding from the province or the ending of funding of a certain program that an expectation has been developed for, or whatever.

The problem becomes even larger when you look at Metro. I want to raise your existence as an indirectly elected board. You are all directly elected and responsible to members in your own areas, your cities and borough, but you are not directly responsible in the sense of your appointment by that board to the metropolitan board. They have dealt with it of course at the council level now by having the direct election proposed. Robarts, way back in the 1960s, proposed something similar.

There are two sides: One is that there is a real sense of lack of accountability. I think of the last preparation time strike in terms of calls I used to get from constituents saying, "I called my local trustee and she says: 'I don't have anything to do with this. Phone somebody on the committee of the Metro board.'" The other side of it is, how many more directly elected levels can we afford to have in terms of the cost of elections, etc, in a place like Metro? It raises large questions for me about the local board role and therefore the burden of funding, and whether or not we should be looking at some fairly major changes over a period of time in terms of how we run education and therefore what accountability is expected. I wonder if I could have some response to that. I am being fairly provocative.

1240

Ms Waese: I will give a very off-the-top-of-my-head response, if I might. I think, though, that is the kind of question that various chairs might want to respond to.

I think the issue is one that has been handled by the previous Ontario government, in that Bill 127 really directs the process of decision-making, particularly in the case Mr Johnston cites of the strike situation, where confidentiality has to prevail. The people involved are certainly at the Metro level in the process, so the local board trustees would rightfully have felt they could not respond.

It is always my contention, though, that regardless of where you sit, if you are elected publicly you have that accountability factor. I think each and every one of us has to be prepared to respond, whether you are directly informed and involved or not. You have to become informed and participate. We are accountable in all our local boards for any decision that is ultimately made in terms of our support or non-support of the decision made at the Metro level.

I have always concerned myself with the public perception that when you get to the Metro level for decisions of the local boards, the continuing battle to fight for local autonomy is truly the right of every local board. We have to work to continue to respect those rights.

Mr Silipo: Very clearly, from the perspective of the average parent or citizen in Metropolitan Toronto, it is an incredible mishmash because you have the local school board, you have the metropolitan school board which makes the decision on the budget, and then you have this third body, the steering committee, which actually directs negotiations and which is autonomous of either the Metro board or the local boards, although, again, there is obviously indirect control through the appointment by the local boards to the steering committee.

I do not know that even among ourselves we agree as to what the solution to that dilemma is. Certainly, the history of it is clear in the sense that the Toronto board was opposed to Bill 127 and the forcing, the mandating, as opposed to the coming together on a voluntary basis, on negotiations.

However, despite that, I think there has been an attempt to try to make that system work. I think there are still problems and we have not, as a group, turned our minds to whether or not—we have turned our minds more to trying to make the process work than to trying to see whether the process ought to be disbanded and rearranged in some other fashion.

The question of possibility of direct election to the Metro school board is also something we at the Toronto board have played around with, but

have not pursued very seriously or vigorously. It is the kind of thing that would obviously need a lot of discussion among ourselves to see what kind of positions we might be able to agree on, if any. But there is no doubt in my mind that the present system certainly does add to the confusion that the average citizen feels of not knowing who to hold accountable.

When you come back to the question of funding, it is compounded by the situation we are in now, which is zero provincial funding. We are having to respond, both locally and at the Metro level, to the taxpayers for initiatives that we have not been responsible in pulling together. We have this terrific situation where the provincial government can look good in putting together these initiatives and announcing them and we get to play the role of the villain in having to hand over the bill.

Mr Maxted: This is a proposal that probably is only shared by myself. I do not even speak on behalf of East York for this one, but it seems to me, as a banker board, when you are thinking about this, Richard, in the future we do not need two banks to deal with. I think the separate board should be back in this form as well on the Metro level. So my rallying cry is, "One faith, one board, one God."

Mr R. F. Johnston: They at least have one board.

Mr Jackson: Thank you, Reverend Ken.

Mr Maxted: The archbishop is going to be very pleased with me after I said that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But they will not be surprised.

The Chairman: I think you will get some letters on that one.

Mr Maxted: It may not have helped you, but it helped me.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As long as you feel better, I feel better.

Ms Waese: Could I just make a brief comment?

The Chairman: Sure.

Ms Waese: It was interesting to hear Ken Maxted. Do pay attention to his first statement that he does not speak either for the Metro board or East York. I would like, though, to put forward one small feeling I have from my own constituency, and that is that if we are being mandated to do what the provincial government is mandating us to do and there is no money, we should rise up and say no.

I just share with you that the general public—I am hearing it in Scarborough and I know we are hearing it all across Metro, that if they are not putting up the money and you are having trouble doing it, such as making larger class sizes at another level simply to be mandated to the 20 to 1—that is an example—then there should be some sort of revolt. We should say, “Enough is enough”. You are not paying for it. We are not doing it.” That is what we are being urged to do.

The Chairman: Thank you for those comments. Just before we go on to Mr Jackson, I have a couple of questions I wanted to ask myself. I am not asking myself; I am asking them.

I am glad you highlighted several things in your brief. One is the complexity of the Metro situation which really necessitates a higher per pupil expenditure, and the other is the whole area of renovations and retrofitting. It is a concern of mine. In our area, we have a lot of boards that do not have funding to renovate and make the necessary repairs to their schools, and unless it is borne by the local taxpayer, it simply will not get done.

One of the reasons I am supporting, other than I am being told to, the lot levy legislation is that I understand this will free up provincial funding.

Mr Jackson: I will have a copy of that tape.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We need that by about one o'clock.

Mr Jackson: Do you want a piece of that?

The Chairman: The development charges legislation will free up other provincial moneys for the whole area of renovations, so I sincerely hope that will come through because I really believe we need it in our area. Would you like to comment on the lot levy proposals?

Ms Waese: I will inasmuch as our staff has just been trying to assess what the implications are for the Toronto school boards, and whether in fact what you are saying will come to fruition for Metro in terms of any dollars. Have we managed to do that yet?

Mr Brown: The first draft of the lot levy legislation in effect said that it was for new pupil spaces and on residential lots. It was then amended, revised and recognized that perhaps that did not meet the needs of all school boards. The introduction of the option to use the lot levy to renovate, replace and to place the lot levy on the industrial-commercial aspect and not confine it to residential has suddenly made that possibility of interest to us.

We have retained a consultative service to analyse those statistics for us and that report will be available by the end of this month. We just received the first draft of that response yesterday afternoon and we have not had time to analyse it as yet.

Ms Waese: If it would be of assistance, I would be pleased to also refer that report and our analysis of it to you.

The Chairman: I would very much appreciate that. The second question may be a slightly tougher one for you. This morning I received on my desk as an exhibit for the committee Metro council's resolution concerning the property tax reform and market value assessment. Of course, one of its clauses included the desire to take education away from the property tax base and put it back into the realm of the province entirely; that is my understanding. This obviously has implications for autonomy and other local issues. I wonder if you would like to comment on that issue.

Ms Waese: I will start by reminding you very clearly once again of the difficulty—let alone the two-tier system Mr Johnston indicated to you—of the fact that we are eight individual boards and we have come from perhaps varying philosophies and understandings. I could not begin to say to you what the various boards would move and support at this time in terms of where they would like to see the tax levy applied.

1250

However, I do know the one thing we must retain is the right for local autonomy and the tax base to follow—is it the students you were saying would affect the boards? Because otherwise the complete control just moves itself over to the province and local boards have no autonomy. Again, if you elect people without any accountability and any ability to make decisions, I think it is just grandstanding. If ever we will be in a position of not being able to respond to the local taxpayers, that would be the case. I think Trustee Raymond and Trustee Silipo would like to respond to that.

Mrs Raymond: I just question how that recommendation, which I know comes from Metro council, was made. I watched part of the debate at Metro council, but not to the end. I understand since that recommendation came from the committee that had been working on market value assessment and it was not debated in Metro council, it just passed along with the rest of the recommendations from that committee. I also understand there was little debate about it at

that committee level. I think they had one outside consultant at least look at models and so on.

I think it is easy for municipal people to say, "It would take a lot of hassle away from us if we did not have to collect those taxes," because they get the hassle for collecting the taxes. As you know, in Metro Toronto well over 50 per cent of that mill rate for public school board supporters is generated by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board.

I guess it is an interesting thing that is out there. It is interesting that they went ahead and said they were in favour of it. I do not think there has been any kind of look at that level at what the options are. They said, "Take it off the local taxpayer." I do not know whether they said 100 per cent funding at the provincial level; maybe they did. There are a lot of other combinations and models. I guess the local income tax is one of them. So I hope the committee would try to find out, before it accepts that wholeheartedly, how much thought was given to it before this went through at the end of a big day.

The Chairman: I believe the clerk is going to be filing that with the committee members this afternoon.

Mr Silipo: I have a couple of comments. The first is that we may not, among the different boards, agree as to the question of the extent to which funding of education ought to be removed from the property taxes or from the local base and on to the provincial level, but we certainly all agree that there ought to be a much more substantial contribution by the provincial government than exists now. I think that is the first point.

The second point is that I always find it fascinating that whenever we get into this discussion about removing education costs from the property tax and shifting them to the provincial level, all of a sudden the question of autonomy comes up, whereas when you compare it with the present situation, where the province contributes nothing, the question of autonomy is not an issue. The province still wants to maintain the right to tell us what we ought to do, and I suppose, understanding the Constitution of our country, to some extent you can appreciate that obviously it might not be desirable for whatever number of boards there are across the province to each be able to do its own thing. But I think it is interesting that the degree of autonomy is not then looked at as another factor when you have a situation where the province is contributing little or nothing in the way of costs.

The other factor that has not been looked at in a very serious way is that I think whenever people deal with the question of property taxes and talk about removing the costs from the property taxes and shifting them to the provincial level, what we are really talking about, in my view—and this is my own position—is really questioning the concept of the property tax system itself, as to whether it is the most appropriate way to be funding education because of all the problems associated with it, because it is not related to people's ability to pay. I think the shift to the provincial level is seen more in terms of looking at other ways, such as the income tax system, of funding education.

I think there are innovative ways that could be developed that shift the cost from a regressive tax, which in my view is what the property tax is, to a more progressive tax, which is what the income tax system is, but still do it in a way that would maintain a reasonable balance in terms of provincial jurisdiction and local autonomy. Whether it is a municipal income tax or something in between, I think there are a lot of innovative things that could be looked at and I hope this committee at some point will take a look at some of those.

The Chairman: If you have any proposals or innovative ideas that you would like to pass along to us from that vantage point, we would be very appreciative.

Mr Brown: I have a very brief comment about the proposal from Metro council about shifting the education tax. The original committee of Metro council was dealing with market value assessment, that political hot potato that has been running around Metro for the last few weeks.

To my knowledge, there was no consultation whatsoever with the educational authorities or the political representatives of the educational authorities in Metro regarding this philosophical position of shifting education tax away from property tax. I suggest to you that a lot of it was a throwaway in terms of the political heat surrounding market value assessment in that debate.

The Chairman: We all know what that is about.

Mr Jackson: On that point, on the concept of political heat, I for one believe that things have to get worse before they are going to get better in terms of serious and substantive educational finance reforms. I do not mean the tampering or tinkering, which may be the words used to describe what is about to happen with pooling; I am talking about substantively addressing the elements of your brief. Your brief clearly says

these are not only identified, but they are exponentially growing in a direction and are going to get worse.

Having been a trustee for 10 years, I have lost all my romantic images of what representation really means. It took a strike to get the public to find out where your phone number is. We are all painfully aware of that. So I do not want to deal with the issue of accountability, because I very much feel that it is highly overrated, that essentially trustees fulfil a constitutional process. But I wish differently, as all of us do, that perhaps it were a little bit more reactive from the community. Having said that, I believe firmly that we are about to see the public get a lot more involved, but involved in a rather focused way, not necessarily in the best interests of education.

I think Dianne Williams partly got into this area of concern. My question generally is where you think we are going to go from here. Clearly the trustees are not in a position of being proactive with that agenda; they are going to be reactionary to that agenda. Provincial politicians, although we are driving the agenda, are not taking responsibility for its outcome.

I will just give you one example and then I will ask for some quick responses, if I could. My municipality yesterday erected signs that specifically say, "We are increasing the cost of this municipal parking lot by \$2 and we would ask you all to contact the Treasurer of Ontario and tell him how excited you are about it," and they mention him by name. To me that is a rather radical initiative. The community understands that we risk the wrath of the government. Their theory is that they got zero transfer payment; how much worse could it get?

I am really asking a serious question of you because you have a political mandate and you have an educational mandate. Trustees carry those two burdens. Where do you see this going? What kind of manifestations of reaction are we going to have to deal with? I have my own theories. I tracked what happened to proposition 13 in the United States, which was educationally based. The public does not realize that 80 per cent of your costs are salaries, that they are fixed by law, arbitrated and so forth. Could I get some quick reaction?

All of what we do is not going to penetrate the basic question of restructuring the priorities for education in this province to have sufficient moneys, or else we have to be honest with property taxpayers and say, "Look, you're going to carry a greater and greater load, so you had better get ready for it and stop your complain-

ing." Replacing a trustee is not going to change it. That is one thing the community understands after a series of one or two elections when half of the positions are acclamations. You are not going to replace trustees.

1300

Mr Maxted: That is my campaign platform.

Mr Jackson: I will get to you later, Ken. You should have brought your collar instead of the red tie today. Can I can get some quick reaction to that? I am very concerned about what is going to happen.

Ms Waese: I would like to respond to Mr Jackson. I am going to be extremely frank in my response. First, I do not think any of us working in the field of education anticipate a lowering of expectations by our parents and the public, not only by the other levels of government, if I might add, Mr Jackson. The expectation, if you listen to our Prime Minister and if you listen to the Premier (Mr Peterson), is that they want more and they want better. They feel our children deserve and need better to be competitive in the global economy. We cannot afford to in any way undermine the quality of education we intend to deliver. We cannot do that without the money, the dollars. We also cannot do it just on the backs of the taxpayers.

If our federal and provincial and municipal governments do not value education and what it means to society as a whole, then we are going to be in big trouble. We cannot expect that any taxpayer is going to be able to carry the burden of the costs of education. We cannot be competitive on the international market unless all of the players place a high priority—if not number one, I would say—on education of our young people. I think we have to start there.

What do we intend to do about it? We do not have too many choices, other than to develop a strategy for educating our public. I know the public hates when different levels of government continue to point fingers at one another as the culprits. We are going to develop a very strong platform for the public to understand where its dollars are being spent. We will identify it. We will let the public decide who should be paying for it and we will let the people decide whether they want to continue to—you know, their expectations are high—request that quality of education. If they do, they will speak to the various levels of government. We are going to make sure that they understand how we spend our money. I will try to be as brief as that.

Mr Filion: I am not going to answer the question so much as sort of the preamble to it,

because I feel it cannot go unanswered. You gave the impression that trustees sort of fulfil a legislative responsibility but maybe we do not have that much contact with the community and people have trouble finding our phone numbers—

Mr Jackson: No, I did not mean to overstate that. As I say, having been a trustee for 10 years, I can assure you that I have seen all types of trustees and all types of communities, but quite frankly, you can fill a city hall if you are going to change the colour of a bus in some communities, but if you do a substantive program change in a community that is going to affect children's lives, sometimes you are lucky to get seven or eight people in the room. That is the concept I was getting at.

Mr Filion: I guess I would have to say that is certainly not true in the area I represent. I do not think any of us around the table would say that was true of any of our constituencies.

Mr Jackson: Metropolitan Toronto may be a little different from a lot of the areas in this province.

Mr Filion: I just wanted to correct that impression. We do have extremely active communities. They are extremely well educated and well informed, and we have a lot of interaction with them.

Ms Waese: If I might just add to that, the motivation is the dollars again. When it starts to really pinch, and it is, the taxpayers are really calling. Interestingly enough, the calls are coming in because the very nature of trustees

seems to be very local, very connected, and so, all of a sudden, they are finding your name because they are trying to figure out how to stop this machine.

The Chairman: Thank you. I completely lost control of time as chair today, as always. Some days it is better than others, but we are very glad that we did take the time to have a very full and frank discussion with you. It has been very helpful.

Ms Waese: I really thank you. We are a large group and it was difficult. I thank you for the time.

The Chairman: It was very valuable. As far as finding the phone numbers, the few constituents who did not find my number during the 1987 strike managed to find it in the last few weeks when the city of Toronto kindly notified every resident of my phone number and asked them to phone me.

Mrs Raymond: We experience that at our municipal level too.

The Chairman: I have two brief announcements for the members. The Literacy Council of Kitchener-Waterloo unfortunately cannot make the two o'clock time slot. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has kindly agreed to come at two o'clock.

Second, there will be a very brief steering committee meeting following the OISE presentation.

The committee recessed at 1305.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1408 in committee room 1.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to start this afternoon's session of the select committee on education, as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education particularly related to the equity, accountability and adequacy of education financing, both operating and capital.

We are pleased to have as our first presentation this afternoon the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I would like to begin by thanking you for being so co-operative and flexible in your scheduling and changing to two o'clock. The committee very much appreciates that. If you would start by introducing yourself for the purposes of Hansard, then you can begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Dr Lawton: Very good. I am Steve Lawton, a professor in the department of educational administration at OISE. With me is Dr Rouleen Wignall, who is a research officer in our department. We are both representing a particular project within the department, the school finance and governance research project. It was because we are involved in this sort of work that we asked to make a presentation to the select committee on the topic of school finance.

We are involved in some research that is funded indirectly by the Ontario Ministry of Education. They provide a transfer grant to OISE that we then compete for internally for research purposes. This past year we were successful in getting funds to look into the finance and governance issue.

We felt it was appropriate for us to assemble a brief on some of the issues, I think from perhaps somewhat a bit more distance than some of your presenters, perhaps a bit more of an academic slant. So we put together, as you see on page 1, a brief that talks about trying to evaluate the current system of educational finance, to identify certain areas of concern and then to describe some trends with implications for Ontario school finance. It is 10 pages. There is also a very brief annotated bibliography of about four items that I have provided for your research staff. Perhaps they are already in the library, but they are background papers we drew upon in preparing this brief.

Really I think the first thing evaluated in the current system of finance—I know the language gets fairly hot sometimes talking about the crisis in education and inadequate funding, but if you are a person who has looked at the literature over a period of years and you are familiar with what is going on in other countries, the United States and other provinces of Canada, and then you stand back—the chairman just mentioned the issues that we in fact identify here: equity, efficiency, adequacy and autonomy, four key values—and you look at how the Ontario school finance system stacks up, it is our own judgement that it really does not stack up all that badly. It is a pretty good system, and it has worked quite well over the years. As policies have changed, as needs have changed, it has been able to adapt.

On the equity issue, we looked at two types. One is the so-called horizontal equity, the equal treatment of equals. This is particularly important from a geographical standpoint, that a grade 2 student in Owen Sound will have the same opportunity in a normal class that a grade 2 child might have here in Metropolitan Toronto, in Dryden or wherever.

But the other is the vertical equity, if you like, the unequal treatment of those with special needs. Again, when you look at special populations or special conditions such as small schools, different languages spoken in the home and so on, you find that our school grant system does make adjustments for this. Formerly they used a weighted-pupil approach that a number of commissions—I am going back to the Committee on the Costs of Education that Jack McCarthy headed up over a decade ago and, more recently, to the Macdonald commission—but none of them liked the weighted-student approach because, I guess, it hid what was going a bit too much. So recently the ministry has brought this out and made what I think are called board-specific grants for this purpose. They are quite closely related, but it puts it perhaps a bit more upfront, a bit more easily interpreted.

They have the mechanisms in place for both horizontal equity and vertical equity and overall I think we would have to say that it works quite well. There are some areas of concern, but we really treat those more under the adequacy issue than under the equity issue.

If we talk about efficiency, I am a bit more critical. There is concern that really there is no mechanism in place other than the local mill rate

to really, if you like, control an amount of money spent on education. It is the annual increase in the mill rate that tends to be the controlling factor that trustees look to in terms of keeping down educational expenditures.

If you look back over the past two decades, you will see that the province as well as the federal government had exercised a direct control over expenditures or over salaries and so on and so forth in order to maintain a hold on public expenditures. You do not really find in the system, in my view, very many efficiency controls. The issue of adequacy is perhaps the key one.

The Chairman: By the way, disregard any beeps. It has nothing to do with time. It is our researcher's computer talking back.

Dr Lawton: Oh, I see. I did look at my watch when I heard the beep. It is not a bad idea, looking at the beep. I talk fast and perhaps I should not try to run through all of this in detail.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Dr Lawton: We separated the equity issue from the adequacy issue. We have a grant ceiling, as I am sure you are all aware. It is uniform across the province except it is varied by these board-specific grants. That is sort of the equity approach to providing equity, but how well you fund that is an adequacy measure. We focus on two aspects. One is the resources that go into the system, how much money, and the other question of adequacy is essentially what you accomplish with that money. So you can look at it both ways.

In terms of adequacy, we have looked at teachers' salaries quite extensively from an international perspective and what we find is that Canadian teachers—and I am generalizing Canadian to Ontario—are in fact among the best-paid teachers in the world. They are well paid. They are along with Luxembourg and Switzerland, according to our analysis, in terms of their income, in terms of purchasing power.

If you use exchange rates you get all sorts of funny figures, and this is what is often done. It shows that Japanese teachers are paid \$1 million a year. I am exaggerating, but my point is if you use exchange rates, you get a very different picture than if you use what are called purchasing power parities, which is what the purchasing power of a salary is in the local economy.

I think that is something to be proud of. I am not pointing to it as something we should be concerned about. The fact that we have well-paid teachers means that we are turning away good university graduates from our teachers' colleges.

That is not the situation a number of countries, particularly the United States, find themselves in. They are scraping the bottom of the barrel to try and find people who want to train as teachers.

We are able to be selective in who comes into teaching. We do not, I do not think, have to worry in a fundamental sense about teacher supply. We may have to worry about a few more spots in faculties of education, but I do not think there is a real problem of getting competent people. I think in terms of the human resources going in, we have adequacy there; also in terms of the facilities.

I know we have a capital shortage right now because of the boom and there are currently problems that have to be addressed, but generally if you look at our physical plants and the resources there, by international standards they are very good. So our adequacy assessment is that it is quite good on the input side.

On the output side, I am sure you have all seen a lot of the international tests that Ontario has taken part in. I would have to say Ontario is one of the leaders in comparing itself with other jurisdictions. I do not know of any other jurisdiction that seems to have participated in so many of these studies. I think that again is something that it is to be congratulated for doing.

When you see these in the newspapers, it is often hard to believe you are reading about the same report. One will tell you that we score with the best in the world; someone else will pick out another in the same report and say we are the worst in the world, and so on. There is a great deal of selectivity, I think. I am assuming you know which reports I am talking about. There was one recently out of Educational Testing Service in the United States.

In my assessment of these—and I think there are an international math, an international science and this recent one that I reviewed—we tend to stand in between the 50th and 75th percentile in terms of the nations that have been included. So I would give us a B plus or maybe even an A minus, if I am in a good mood, in terms of the accomplishments of our systems, when you bear in mind that our system is less selective than some of those.

In Hong Kong, for example, in grade 13—you see this in the Premier's Council reports—the Hong Kong students are first in everything. I might say that my wife is from Hong Kong, and they are perfectly right: she is first in everything. But if you look at the 13-year-olds' examinations in the international science test, you find in fact that they are probably in the bottom third. The

reason is that it is a very selective educational system, so the people you measure who are at the grade 12 level are not the same ones you measure at the grade 8 level.

These international comparisons are difficult, but I think we would have to say that on the output side we are doing an adequate job. There is always room for improvement and I think we should always be working on it, but I think some of the alarmist statements that have been made are really overstating the case and perhaps have to be viewed with a bit of scepticism.

Autonomy is the final general issue in terms of assessing the school finance plan. Here we have divided it into three types really. One is fiscal autonomy. Of course, school boards do have the right to raise their own funds.

We have talked about capacity. The capacity to do something is also an important factor in autonomy. Whether a school board has the resources, the trained personnel to engage in a new activity is an important part of autonomy.

Finally is what we referred to as the regulation issue, the whole issue of whether they are being given the freedom through existing regulations to do certain activities or whether they are being told to do certain activities or whether they are being forbidden to do certain activities. It is in this area that I think that we have really seen a decline in autonomy in school boards, that we have seen the province increasingly rely upon mandates.

Of course, the classic example is mandating the size of grade 1 and 2 classes, a 20 to 1 ratio; but there are a lot of other examples one can point to. So there seems to be an increasing trend there towards mandating, using rules to tell school boards what to do. In that role, I think there has been a decline in autonomy.

Again, if you stand back and look from an international perspective, I do not think we really stack up badly on autonomy. We do not have a fully centralized system as some jurisdictions do, nor is it one that is completely local, where because of lack of resources or capability they are not able to do things. I really think we stack up rather well, although this one trend is the one that I find particularly problematic.

That is basically the sense of the overview of the school finance system. As I say, overall I think it looks quite good by international standards and I think it is one to be satisfied with.

A person I know quite well, Leon Brumer, is over here from the school business and finance branch. I think there is a competent core of people there who are able and familiar with the

current technology, if you want to call it that, of school finance and have a capability of implementing policies that are decided upon by government. They are able to do so on an annual basis and a timely basis. That may seem obvious to us, but there are a lot of jurisdictions in the world where these things go by fits and starts, where it can be five or 10 years before adjustments are made in a school grant plan or a finance plan and so on; whereas here we have tended, I think, to move with the times.

1420

There are six areas of concern I have mentioned here: high-spending school boards, new construction, educators' salaries, equity for northern boards, transportation and adult education. On two of those issues, high-spending boards and educators' salaries, I really, I suppose, might be called an apologist. That is to say I do not think our high-spending boards are spending too much, generally speaking.

I find that education, particularly in the metropolitan areas, is what I call a demand-driven service. There is exceedingly high demand in metropolitan areas because you are dealing with two factors: a well-educated populace and a situation where you have high population density, which means that you are able to offer programs at a very low cost per pupil, relatively speaking, compared to rural and northern areas where the cost per pupil of laying on special programs can be exceedingly high.

So you have a situation where people want more education for their children and where the cost per pupil is relatively low. Ironically, they are honestly paying more for education in areas like Toronto, Durham and Mississauga and so on because of the inflated values of properties. Values of people's property is much higher in these areas than it is in other parts of the province, relative to their incomes. So it actually turns out that they are paying more of their annual income in terms of education taxes than are people in many other parts of the province. Even though they are paying more, relatively speaking, they are still demanding more because of the value they place on education.

I think that a lot of the assumption is that because they have that commercial and industrial assessment, they are spending more. According to our research, that really is not the primary explanation. It is really a demand-driven source much more than a price-driven source, which tends to be the usual assumption.

On teachers' salaries, I have already commented that I think our teachers are well paid, but

I think we are fortunate in that position. I think that is the position we want to hold on to. There have been studies; the most detailed was one done about a decade ago for the Committee on the Costs of Education that Haye Associates did that looked at teachers' salaries in comparison to a number of other professions, and they found they were fairly paid. They also compared senior administrators' salaries and actually found them underpaid compared to the private sector.

So the evidence at hand is that teachers are well paid here but they are not overpaid. I think it is a position that we want to hold on to, because as we approach this period where we are going to have to hire a lot of new teachers because of retirements, we want to be able to be selective.

Those are two areas I am an apologist for, so to speak. The other four areas are areas that I think need attention for improvement. I am assuming there are other groups that are speaking about needs in northern boards, transportation problems, adult education and, my last issue, new construction. I am not going to go into those. That is for the special interest groups to speak to more than me. But I think they are the areas we would pick out as deserving particular attention, although one of my hopefully funny lines is about new construction, where I compare the parking lot down the street from me to an abandoned mobile home park because of all the temporary buildings out there. Aesthetically I have some objections to it and I have quoted John Parkin, one of Canada's leading modern architects, now deceased, in terms of some foresight he had back in the 1940s about how to cope with this problem. No one listened to him—maybe that is not completely true.

The final two things in our brief are demographic trends. There is an article in one of the research reports by David Foot, a demographer at the University of Toronto, which I have provided to your research officer. He has pointed out how we are going through this period of the echo to the baby boom. It is going to be a short echo, presumably, it looks like about 10 years long. Then we are going to go into a decline that will probably last well into the next century. So this phenomenon of building new schools will last maybe five to 10 years and then it will be over. Foot goes on to say: "You're going to have to figure out what to do with those schools you're building right now. Perhaps you can design them so they can be turned into retirement homes." Anyway, I think Foot gives an interesting perspective.

Mr Mahoney: You will be there before me.

Dr Lawton: Pardon?

Mr Mahoney: They could be retirement homes for us, and I just said Johnston would be there before me.

The Chairman: But not by much.

Dr Lawton: I do point out in here, and I suppose this is a bit of a critique, that in the 1960s and 1970s, Dr Robert Jackson, who, I am sure you know, was the first director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who was a demographer trained at the London Institute of Education, had maintained with the ministry a practice of doing demographic projections. This fell by the wayside in the late 1970s when essentially there was a surplus of teachers, vacant classes; it just did not seem like demographics were necessary.

I think we are at a period now where we really ought to be doing these projections on a regular basis, either within the ministry or some outside agency. OISE? No, no. I think it is an area we want to pay attention to and perhaps do a little more planning than we have been. We should not have been surprised by the sudden demand for teachers and the construction boom, but we were. The economic boom really did surprise everybody and I think that is a part of it quite beyond the demographics, but perhaps a bit more attention there on a regular basis would assist us.

The other and closing trend is restructuring. One of the things I have been doing recently is participating in some international conferences. I was in Oxford, England, recently for a round table on school policy. People were there from England, Nigeria, Australia, the United States and Canada. One of the universal phenomena—almost universal phenomena—is restructuring educational systems.

It is part of the deregulation movement, the privatization movement, perestroika, if you like; the moving towards different styles of management that are less dependent upon bureaucratic process control and more oriented on looking at what you want to do, creating a vision of where you want people to go, letting them get on with it and holding them accountable. It is a different management style, restructuring educational systems—trying to find ways for them to manage their resources, especially their human resources but all their resources, more effectively.

I pointed out that we have very good teachers, in my view, well-educated administrators, yet here we are sitting in a system where we find they are being told how many children to put in a grade 1 class down the hall. Why do we pay a

director \$100,000 a year, a principal \$70,000 a year and a teacher \$50,000 a year and then tell them how many children should go in that classroom? Were they not educated to make that sort of decision?

It is that sort of mandate. I realize I am pointing fingers here, but I recognize that demographically it is a great policy. My kids, believe it or not, are six and two. My wife is a baby boomer, even if I am not. It is well-suited policy for people, the baby boomers who now have their little kids—or at least on the feminine side are having the little kids—who are going to school. It meets my needs and I admit that, yet it disturbs me when I go into a school system where for 20 years they have had a system of allowing each school to decide how to deploy resources—teachers, custodians, secretaries, teachers' aides—and deciding them using a units of force measure; how to assign staff.

Then that whole thing is essentially countermanded by a mandate that now they have to have class sizes of this. You say it is an average of 20, but in fact I am told it is a maximum. That 21st kid comes in the classroom and the question is where is he being bused to. He is over the 20 limit. Essentially, the flexibility that used to be there has been removed and the ability of these people to make decisions.

I am saying that I think there are serious management problems to be looked at in terms of effectively using the staff. There are signs there of a lack of trust in the middle management of decision-making at the school board level. This is what other countries are addressing, and I suggest it is one of the issues we have to address here, because effective management of our human resources may be the most important economic or fiscal problem we face in the coming decades. End of speech.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On the whole, you said you liked this kind of solution; it should not affect grants to OISE. On the whole, he liked it. I heard him say that.

Dr Lawton: I hope you would not think that this was in any way, shape or form an interest group coming to present before you. I really did try to stick to the elementary-secondary system. I admit that in the demographic issue there was a bit of a plug for Bob Jackson, but I think he was a real contributor to Ontario education, and I do not mind remembering him in this forum. I am happy to take questions if you have time for that.

1430

The Chairman: Professor Lawton, thank you very much for a fascinating presentation. I had

been going to say that there was no vested interest I could attach to your presentation until Richard Johnston piped up with his comment. That notwithstanding, I think it was quite valuable. Your analysis of the criteria for assessment of a finance plan fit in very nicely with our committee's mandate and we appreciate that.

Before I go to Mr Johnston and Mr Pelissero for questions, I did want to formally thank you on behalf of the committee for the assistance you provided to our researchers, Dr Gardner and I think Ann Porter at the time, in our previous endeavours.

Dr Lawton: I was going to say that I enjoyed coming last time so much that we thought we would make it a reprise.

The Chairman: So while we very much miss Walter Pitman's presence at this particular presentation, we are very glad to have you.

Dr Lawton: Thank you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is a very interesting document, very useful to us, I would say. My line of questioning, though, will be on the area of accountability, which I do not detect much comment on. From your perspective you are really looking at managerial accountability, with some indication that a comprehensive audit, which is missing at the moment, may be something we should be bringing into the system, that kind of thing. But the democratic accountability question in terms of paying the piper and the elector knowing where his bucks are going in the system and therefore being able to place influence on the system in terms of where the dollars are going is an issue you do not deal with very much, in terms of the complications of our particular form of autonomy, if you will. I wonder if you might spend a little time talking to us about that.

Dr Lawton: Sure. There are different approaches to doing it. What I have done here is set it at a macroscopic level: We know how much we are spending, we have these international comparisons, so from a large-scale perspective, there is a fair amount of accountability there. Procedurally, we do have, I would say, a very well trained group of business officials in school boards. In my 20 years here, the number of scandals I have heard about has been very small and I think they do a good job of keeping track of it.

I personally think the idea of actually knowing each dollar here and how it is connected to an output down here from the school system is a hopeless thing to do. I just do not think you can

trace that dollar I pay as a ratepayer and look at how it goes to Metro and then over there and comes back to my kids at school, and figure out accountability for it in that sense.

There are several approaches towards the accountability issue that have been taken. One thing I brought along really just illustrates some things on salaries, but I did not use it. It is a publication, *State Education Indicators*. Some of the US states are moving towards what you might call a report card on the school system. Sometimes they are issued just at a state level, sometimes at a school board level, sometimes even at a school level, where there are maybe 20 indicators of how well they are doing.

Some of these would include their budget figures, average teacher salary, this, that and the other thing. Maybe the school budget or the school board budget would be included. They look at how some states are using this right down to the school level, like South Carolina. Others, like Connecticut, are using it much more akin to the way Ontario is using its assessment program.

The other approach is the restructuring approach. This idea of moving responsibility down to the school level sometimes is done in a purely administrative way, what they have done in Edmonton. This is where that whole issue of restructuring and management comes in. They moved the authority down to the school level. They have perhaps standardized testing. It is reported confidentially to the school, not publicly. It has not moved into this market choice thing you see in some parts of the United States, but where it is available at the school system level to the trustees, to the principal and teachers at the school level. Maybe, in the case of Alberta or Edmonton, they even have questionnaires that are sent out annually to the parents and students in each school, asking them how it is doing.

They have 75 per cent of their budget at the school level, for teachers, for different goods and services. Twenty-five per cent mainly for psychologists and cleaning and so on is still housed at the school board level.

Other jurisdictions, particularly the United Kingdom, are moving to restructuring where they have a board of governors at the school level. Of course, if you are familiar with that, they even are giving larger schools the right to opt out of their local school system and to collect money directly from the national government.

These are ways of moving accountability down to the school level, either doing it in a political and administrative way, as in the case of

the United Kingdom, or in a strictly administrative way, as in the case of Alberta.

We are engaged in some research in this activity. The little example I gave about the director who until a year ago used to have a system of allocating staff at the school level came out of that research.

Not much is being done on this issue of structuring and restructuring in Ontario. There are spots of it around Canada. It is where we do think there are opportunities for action in the management direction, but I think it is something that ought to be researched carefully. It should not be introduced, if someone wants to introduce it, holus-bolus provincially. You should do different models, pilot studies, this sort of thing. Save us from the mandate, that everyone does the same thing at the same time. Is that adequate?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is very helpful. I have real trouble with the administrative perestroika notion, because I think that pretends to answer democratic control questions and really does not. It adds this whole professional mystique control which really does not allow the people to have a major say in it, but I also understand the difficulties the British system is having. We do not really want to go back to 1,500 school boards as we used to have.

Dr Lawton: For me, the question is open. That is all I can say.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am pleased you did address it. I think it is very difficult for us to deal with any kind of financial restructuring without really considering the democratic consequences of what we are doing.

Dr Lawton: Agreed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just look at Metro at the moment. I just cannot see how people who supposedly believe in responsible government can actually believe that what we have presently, with local boards—an indirectly elected Metro board and our provincial government, which controls much of education, as you are indicating, and pays nothing for it, in Metropolitan Toronto, to the public board—is anything that can be seen as democratically accountable in any sense of the expression at all.

Mr Pelissero: I was interested in some of your comments around high-spending school boards and why they are high-spending. We heard this morning from the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association. They were quoting some figures in terms of two boards that are in my area, the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Lincoln County Board of

Education. They were comparing costs per pupil versus what, say, the Metro boards were spending. I was pleased to hear part of the explanation of why that is the case, in terms of some of the services that are demanded.

I was also interested in some of your comments around adult education, why the province may not be willing to welcome them with open arms; I think that was your terminology. It is something we are going to have to address.

Dr Lawton: I agree. I think it is extremely important, and I apologize for not really giving due time to it.

Mr Pelissero: It was particularly a challenge—this may be more of a statement than a question—in the Lincoln county boards when they were talking about sharing facilities. In some cases, one of the boards was throwing adult education into the numbers to try to bolster the student population so it could justify a facility. I do not want to reopen that battle and fight that all over again, but I have had supporters of both systems come to me and say: “It’s not right. They’re skewing the numbers.” They feel the same way you do, that there has to be a way, whether it is through transportation—you identify in Toronto \$157 a student, when we have a transit system—on a work-to-rule now, I guess, but that is beside the point.

Quite frankly, I find your presentation refreshing in attempts to address some of those things, as you say, from a third-party perspective. I really appreciate the brief.

The Chairman: Did you want to make any comments?

Dr Lawton: The adult education—as you say, I did not comment, but you have had a chance to glance through it—is so open-ended because there are eight million adults out there. The mind boggles if we should all get a sudden taste to go back and take grade 13 chemistry or something. On the other hand, we have this demographic picture whereby particularly baby boomer women—the kids are getting into school right now. My wife is starting to take an adult education course. Actually, it is a church rather than a school, but it offers babysitting. This is going to be a phenomenon, I think, over the next decade as well. Many of these people will be re-entering the workforce. My wife is a secretary. She does not know word processing; she knows how to change diapers. So do I. There is going to be retraining before she re-enters.

1440

I think we must examine this whole issue of retraining the adult labour force and the role the secondary system can play, and in literacy perhaps even the elementary system, because often they are not socially distant from the local constituency: It is not a community college, it is not a university; it is the neighbourhood school, it is the high school across the way, so it is much easier for them to approach and go in there.

I am very sympathetic with adult education and the needs of the province, but at the same time I am sympathetic to the provincial perspective. The mind boggles at the implications if one does not have some sort of criteria in place in terms of how to make certain that the personal and economic needs are being served in an economically defensible manner.

Mr Pelissero: Kind of like approved costs versus total costs.

Dr Lawton: Something like that.

Mr Pelissero: Thank you.

Mrs O'Neill: I would like to go back to page 10, where you talk about local management of school and school-based management. I am going back in my memory to this, but there is an association in Ontario, and you likely know the official name of it and I do not, that has to do with community-based schools. Seven or eight years ago there seemed to be some schools within the city of Toronto that were being put up as models of this. Actually, I visited three of them. I am quite disappointed, I guess, in that I presume you have checked and followed and looked for data and/or pilot projects such as this, and you do not seem to have come up with any, if I hear you correctly this afternoon.

Dr Lawton: I must say this is, quite frankly, one of our primary research agendas during the current year, to explore this more fully; the study we have done so far involved interviewing nine directors of education about the issue of decentralization to the school level. At least based on those interviews, they spoke of some schools with parent committees that did review the budgets perhaps, but there was not what I would call, overall, a community-based education.

I can provide a draft of the paper to your research staff, if you like, where I asked them, “If you were staffing a school, what involvement would there be for the principal, the teachers, the department heads, the students,”—this is a secondary school—“parents, community,”—then I got fun—“personnel director, the local trustee for that ward, other trustees and a member of the teachers’ union?” One of them asked, when I got

down to the teachers' union and the local trustee, whether I had a minus two on my scale. The point is that when you look at the distribution of that, they felt basically it should be the principal in consultation with the department head, perhaps with a little input from students and from teachers.

Mrs O'Neill: What kind of sample was it?

Dr Lawton: This was not a representative sample. It did not include the city of Toronto. Some of my colleagues were doing a number of other studies with the directors and we did not want to go to the same boards twice, so I did not want to go into Toronto. As we pursue this further, I think that whole democratic notion of community-based has to be an important part of it. As I said, there are the two models, one involving the community and one simply being administrative. For me, which is best is an open question. I am sorry we have not done it yet, but it is on our agenda.

Mrs O'Neill: With 170 boards, and you said you had done nine, were they spread across the province?

Dr Lawton: It was mainly southern Ontario, within about a two-hour drive. We paired up public and separate boards. It covered as far as you can get in about two hours and back in the same day, because we did not want to spend on overnight accommodation.

Mrs O'Neill: There certainly are some boards that are doing school-based budgeting. I am aware of those, and I think there are some, certainly within Metropolitan Toronto, that are doing some kind of co-operative choice regarding personnel with their parent group and/or, in some cases, community group. It is very exciting. I have always wondered why it has not spread more quickly. I presume it is built on fears and doubts.

Dr Lawton: Personally, I do not think it is easy, for one thing, to do effectively.

Mrs O'Neill: No, it is not easy, but it does make for a very different atmosphere within that community.

Dr Lawton: I will perhaps at some time, through the committee or directly, ask you to nominate some places where we might go in, because we do want to look into those.

Mrs O'Neill: What about taking a survey of the 170 boards, just to see what they are doing? That would be much more up-to-date information than I would have.

Dr Lawton: Yes, I think that is a perfectly reasonable thing. In fact, this is one of the next

stages we are proposing in our funding proposal for next year, to do essentially that, except we were going to include some other provinces and jurisdictions. I am fortunate to have a half-year sabbatical and will be spending some time in Australia, where they are doing some of this, and New Zealand.

Mrs O'Neill: That is correct.

Dr Lawton: It was surprising to us that no one else essentially was doing systematic research on restructuring in Ontario education or Canadian education except for one professor out in British Columbia, Dan Brown, whose report is included in the volume I gave you, when in fact around the world it seems to be one of the major trends.

Mrs O'Neill: It ties in very well with accountability on all aspects. I certainly feel, as you do, that it is very well worth proceeding further on that kind of study. The association whose name I cannot quite remember would likely be a resource as well.

Dr Lawton: I am generally aware of it and I know some people who did a major study on community-based education about a decade ago.

Mrs O'Neill: It is getting to be old stuff now.

Dr Lawton: We can discuss essentially that for quite a while, but I am really working from a narrow—I will provide the one article, the draft, to your research officer and he can share it with you if you like.

Mrs O'Neill: That would be very helpful. I am most interested. Thank you very much.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You must remember that the motivation to do this in a lot of jurisdictions is not necessarily democratic local control. A lot of it has been union-busting, especially attempts to try to stop staff unions from operating.

Mrs O'Neill: Not always.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Not always. I am just saying that the motivations for this, why jurisdictions have done it, have been very different. Some have been done for some very progressive reasons of local control.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you suggesting another area of research?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just saying there is more behind this stuff than meets the eye.

Mrs O'Neill: No, I am serious. I agree.

Dr Lawton: It is complex. That is why I say if one wanted to move in that direction, professionally I would certainly recommend pilot testing different models in a fairly systematic way and evaluating them in a fairly systematic way. I do

not want to sound like a vested interest group here.

Mrs O'Neill: That ties in with our area of regulations that you were suggesting earlier.

Dr Lawton: I think that is the way to go; as in places like Dade county or Soho in England, where they essentially adapted some of these before it was mandated in the United Kingdom, which went with the pilot study approach. That seems to be a far more acceptable way of moving this. Edmonton, too. They did the pilot study approach and then let others get on the bandwagon if they wished to. That approach seems to be one way to move in this direction.

The Chairman: Professor Lawton and Dr

Wignall, thank you very much for your contribution to our committee. It has been, as I say, quite fascinating and very helpful.

Just before we adjourn, I have a couple of messages for committee members. If anybody requires cab slips to the airport for the Windsor trip, please see the clerk, who has them.

Second, we are having a steering committee meeting immediately following adjournment today, if members of the steering committee would please stay.

We stand adjourned until 10 o'clock, 25 September, at the Holiday Inn in Windsor.

The committee adjourned at 1450.

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 25 September 1989



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 25 September 1989

The committee met at 1004 in the Trianon Room, Holiday Inn, Windsor.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the select committee on education. I believe we will get started now. The select committee is very pleased to be with you in Windsor as we continue our travels and our public hearings as we continue to look at the future of education financing relating to equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

We are pleased to have as our first presentation this morning the Windsor Board of Education. Would you come forward, please? Good morning and welcome to our committee. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we hope that at least part of that can be reserved for members' questions. If you would begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, you may commence whenever you are ready.

WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Payne: My name is Stephen C. Payne, director of education and secretary for the Windsor Board of Education. With me is the chairperson of the board, Thomas A. Kilpatrick, who will be presenting our brief, and also Robert A. Duren, who is our superintendent of business and treasurer, and we are here to assist the chairman. Mr Kilpatrick will proceed.

Mr Kilpatrick: The Windsor Board of Education is pleased to be here today and to be able to submit a brief to the select committee on the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances. I think you have all received our presentation that I would like to go over in some detail over the next few minutes.

Many of the comments I am going to make today are similar to the comments in our brief to the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education and also some of the topics that were requested in the commission's letter of 23 August 1989.

The first area I would like to address has to do with the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment with the Windsor separate school board. When funding came about and the

inevitability of it came about, we supported the concept of pooling on a local basis versus a provincial basis, partly because of the inevitability of it and partly because we thought we were going to be treated fairly by the province.

In making this recommendation to our board we were cognizant of statements made by the government that no public school would be negatively affected by the extension of funding. Our impression is that this has not happened, it is not going to happen in the city of Windsor, and we have a problem with what is happening with the extended funding.

In the minister's comments on 18 May 1989 he states: "that it is recognized, however, that some boards may experience a net loss of revenue. These boards will be compensated." The problem we are having is that we do not see that our board is going to be compensated for the net loss we are going to incur.

While the exact impact cannot be determined until 1990, the modelling done on the 1988 financial picture makes it abundantly clear that the Windsor Board of Education will have serious negative financial implications from the sharing of commercial and industrial assessments announced by the Minister of Education.

The Windsor Board of Education is going to lose \$12 million worth of tax revenue as a result of the changes, and offsetting grants because of our lower assessment base will only give us \$7 million of that \$12 million back. It also means that the board is going to be about \$5 million short on an annual basis for operating purposes. The ministry made a commitment that it will reimburse the board to the extent of \$3 million for this shortfall but there is no mention of what is going to happen with the shortfall of \$2 million.

Coincidentally with the announcement on sharing of commercial and industrial assessment, the Minister of Education increased the grant ceilings for both elementary and secondary pupils, but we would contend that this is a general increase that covers all boards in Ontario and is a very separate issue and has nothing to do with the transfer of commercial and industrial assessment to the coterminous board.

If the Ministry of Education is going to remain true to its word, then it must develop a system to reimburse this board for the \$3-million loss in tax

revenues after the six-year phase-in period. The assessment that was transferred to the coterminous board will not be available for any future increases in costs as a result of the level of programs that we have developed at the board over the past number of decades. The loss in revenue that will be available to fund future increases of present programs also must be recognized by the Ministry of Education.

This board is not opposed to the sharing of assessment with a coterminous board, but we believe that, consistent with the Ministry of Education's commitment, no board should be put into a position to assist in the financing of the extension of funding to the separate school system. This in fact is what is taking place by the government introducing the sharing in the manner it has for communities, such as the city of Windsor, that have a high commercial and industrial assessment base. The Ministry of Education simply has not kept the commitment it made when it announced the extension of funding to the Roman Catholic separate school system.

The funding started out in June 1984, I think, at \$400 million. In my understanding, it is now up to almost \$1 billion. We feel very much that the public system is picking up a great deal of that cost. The sharing that was supposed to be done and the public school system not picking up the extra costs is not taking place. We are picking up a lot of these extra costs. We are not getting our fair share and there is no indication that this is going to change.

I guess the public boards are getting the feeling, at least in the city of Windsor and possibly in the community, that if you co-operate and work with the government you do not get treated as well or as fairly as when you complain and say, "No, we're not going to implement; we're going to work against you." If you take a very aggressive approach in not trying to co-operate, you sometimes get treated better than when you work with the government and try to get things implemented. This area is a great concern.

1010

In the area of capital grants, which I would like to address now, the present plan is out of date. What is being used under the capital grant plan does not really fit what is happening in 1989. It was done in 1979 and has not been revised appropriately to take into consideration not only our contracts with our employees but the programs that are being offered in schools.

The provisions relating to renovations and replacement provide for situations where expenditures become eligible for grants. However, the major cause of concern by the Windsor Board of Education is that the pressure on the provincial government for new pupil spaces is greater in the Toronto area and has been overemphasized to the detriment of critical, major renovations and replacements of old schools.

In the city of Windsor we have two schools presently—one is called Dougall Avenue Elementary School and the other one is called King Edward Elementary School—which are approximately 90 years old. We have been putting these two schools in our forecasts for the last number of years, and continually we have no money coming forth. It appears that the money being spent on new construction is being spent to the detriment of some of the older schools in the province.

With the storm we had in Windsor a few months ago, we had bricks come off that building at Dougall. If there had been children in the playground, we could have had some problems. We are spending an excessive amount of money now just to keep the building together. It is safe, there is no question of safety, but there is a great question of whether we are ever going to get any money from the government in order to replace 90-year-old buildings we have in the city.

Those two schools at present are two of the schools about which we have a great concern over what is going to happen regarding funding. We have written the minister and asked for an audience with the minister, and to this time we have not had any indication that the minister is paying attention to our request other than to say that we are not going to get any money, while in Toronto and in large growth areas, an excessive amount of money is being spent on new construction. But what is going to happen with the replacement of our old schools?

In addition to these projects I have mentioned, there are acres and acres of roofs that need to be replaced, as well as heating systems and electrical distribution systems that must be upgraded in the older schools to meet the current learning environment. The Ministry of Education must allocate major funds to the repair and renovation of existing schools in order to protect the present investment. In 1989, the need of school boards in Ontario for capital construction was \$1.7 billion to \$2 billion. The large majority of this is was for additional pupil spaces.

In the light of the current pressure for school construction, Ontario must reassess its commitment to education's capital stock. Additional

capital funds must be allocated to school boards in order to sufficiently narrow the gap between the present \$400-million commitment and the \$2-billion need.

This must come from additional funds from the province, not shuffling the present debt. Local boards cannot meet the need alone. Over the next five years, the Windsor board alone, which is a non-growth board, has identified \$18 million in this area. The Windsor Board of Education respectfully recommends that the government of Ontario establish a separate allocation for school renovation and replacement through additional provincial funding at a level of \$500 million per year.

In the area of operating grants, the grant ceilings, again, are hopelessly out of date. These figures have not been adjusted for so many different reasons over the years that no one can figure out or identify what they are supposed to cover, and they do not directly relate to the cost of providing the current levels of programs.

It is our position at the Windsor board that school boards should be able to work with grant ceilings that have been established on the cost of providing programs that are required to meet the local needs of the community. We believe this should be done by establishing some type of realistic pupil-expenditure ceilings.

In the city of Windsor, our board has historically offered many special education programs in many of the high-technological studies programs, where our coterminous board has not. We have expended a sizeable amount of money, but we still get our grant levels in the same area. The grant ceilings should be redefined and allocated based on the actual program offerings provided by each board, with a provision for funding levels for those programs that are mandated by the province.

The present government has indicated that it is returning to the 60 per cent financing of education. Our board presently gets 34 per cent, and we are wondering where our other 26 per cent is. How are we supposed to continue to offer the high-quality programs we do when we are not working on a level playing field or receiving the moneys we are supposed to receive in order to offer the excellent programs that we do?

Among other related issues that we feel this committee should consider is the fiscal year end. We agree with the change to 1 September to 31 August. We hope a committee would be set up with trustee organizations, supervisory officers and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials that could determine if it is feasible to

have a 31 August year end and also look at the Alberta experience and make a recommendation that the 31 August date come into effect. I think the reasons are fairly obvious why that should take place.

Single-panel reporting: I do not think the present system with the dual-panel reporting is really needed any more, with the extension of financing and each system now having kindergarten to Ontario academic course. I think having a one-panel reporting system would be more appropriate. Also, it is my understanding that this is happening in the near future anyway, but our board would support that we go to a single-panel reporting system.

One of the last items I would like to address has to do with cash flow considerations. We have a problem in the city of Windsor, as do a few other boards, but my understanding is that many other boards in the province do not have the particular problem with cash flow concerns that we have. Each year in the city of Windsor our board is \$750,000 short because we do not receive the payments in extra interest charges from the city when we are supposed to.

What the city is doing is coming under an archaic section of the Education Act and limiting our payments to four times a year. Many other boards receive them as required or on more numerous occasions. As a result of this, we have had to incur \$750,000 worth of interest expenses. If you look at Ontario, it has improved to a small degree its transference of grant money in the last few years. Nevertheless, these transfers still come at a slower pace to our board than we feel they should.

But if you look at the Department of National Revenue, the Teachers' Superannuation Commission and local utilities, they have changed their procedures in the last couple of years to ensure that the money owed them is received immediately after they have billed the board. We seem to have a two-standard system: the bills that come to us from bodies have to be paid, but when we want our money, not only does the province not give it to us when we feel it should, but also the city does not give it to us when we feel it should.

We would recommend that grants be transferred to school boards by a method which is related directly to the occurrence of expenditures, and in the case of municipalities the education levy should be forwarded at the time the education taxes are received by the municipality. If that happened, then we would receive our money on a current basis. For the taxpayer in the city of

Windsor it really does not make a difference, but we lose almost \$750,000 in money we could have used for education. We feel it is our money and we should receive it when it is due.

One additional item that is not in the brief we have presented—and I really do not know what this committee can do about it—relates to the change in the OHIP premiums. Our board is now going to incur an extra \$900,000 in extra OHIP premiums because of the change in the legislation. We understand this is happening in other companies and other bodies throughout the province, but I mention this to indicate that the local school boards are again having to finance and take care of themselves more and more, and the provincial government seems to be backing out more and more in what it is doing and pushing everything to the local taxpayer.

We want an educational system that has a high quality. We have a system that has a high quality, but you are making it more and more difficult for us by continually having these added-on costs to us. In many of the areas we have mentioned today, we feel we are going to have extreme difficulty in the future if we do not get some assistance from the province and if we continue to have more and more of the cost put on the local taxpayer.

1020

The Chairman: You have left us about 13 or 14 minutes for questions. I am very appreciative of that.

I must say I have some sympathy for your position on the need for major renovations and repair of the older schools. Ironically, I represent a Toronto riding and we have a very similar situation where many of our schools are ageing and need a tremendous amount of repair.

One reason I have been quite supportive of the lot levy proposals—"development charges" is the official name in the legislation that is now before us; not before our committee but before the Legislature—is that I understand they will free up more money for things such as repairs, renovations and retrofitting. Do you have any comment on the lot levy proposals?

Mr Kilpatrick: Under our old Association of Large School Boards in Ontario arrangement, we supported the lot levy, and under our new association we support the lot levies. The problem in the city of Windsor is that we have not had a lot of growth and so getting money from lot levies at this point is really not a good source of funds to us. If Windsor goes into an economic boom and we have a fantastic amount of growth, it may be, but that is not indicated on the horizon.

There is also the point that if we then tax new businesses and families coming in, are we then also going to stop growth? We are not a Toronto, we are not an Ottawa-Carleton area, we are not a Peel and we are not a Mississauga. We are a very, very different community down here. Lot levies will not generate funds. What has happened is that we have ageing schools and we have no money coming in. The lot levy issue will not really satisfy that.

The Chairman: I was thinking more from the vantage point that if the province's share for new construction is reduced to 60 per cent, we are going to have more moneys for communities like Windsor or Toronto or other communities which have not really experienced a lot in the way of growth but do have the ageing facilities. But I do appreciate your comments on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would like to hear the response to that, because that is one of the new mythologies that is being developed out there; that all this money is going to be freed up because of the lot levies and the province is going to give more to people like you. I would like to hear your response.

Mr Kilpatrick: I think our director of finance would have more of an interesting response than I would have on that, since he knows a lot more about it than I do.

Mr Dureno: We certainly agree with that and that is why we supported the position. We understand the tremendous pressures that are on those high-growth areas and we applaud the initiatives taken in the development charges legislation that, hopefully, will be passed.

I guess what we want to do is ensure that the freeing up of that money actually does come to communities like Windsor. We know there is tremendous provincial need. We were assured that the extension or the sharing of commercial-industrial assessment would not hit us negatively either, and we think it has, tremendously. So we would support the developmental charges, but we want to ensure that the money that is freed up actually does flow into the repair and renovation areas.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On the Ontario health insurance plan matter, other boards have in fact given us a fairly good accounting of where they are being hit in terms of OHIP, unemployment insurance changes and how the goods and services tax would effect them, as well. Has your board done any estimate? You have \$900,000, almost \$1 million, in OHIP costs. What about UI

and GST effects? Have you done any estimates on that?

Mr Dureno: We really have not done any estimates on the GST and I do not have the figures available today on unemployment insurance.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know you have the UI ones right now. Could you forward those to us? When you have a GST calculation, that would be useful, as well.

With respect to the \$2-million shortfall in the projections from the pooling, does that include some inflation projection in it or is that a 1989 dollar amount that you are working on?

Mr Dureno: That is part of the difficulty, I guess, as we see the legislation, that it is really a snapshot in time and it does not take into account the inflation that will occur when this is fully implemented. The \$2-million shortfall in the presentation that was made by the government really is accounted for, in its terms, through the increase in grant ceiling that was provided for all boards this year. As the chairman indicated, we do not consider that to really be part of the share in commercial-industrial assessment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Of course not.

Mr Dureno: I guess the second problem with that is the \$3 million is not really part of the regular grant calculation. It is called a special payment for 18 schools board in the province where there is a shortfall to their regular process. We would like to see that \$3-million calculation somehow become part of the regular calculation so that it would continue past the six years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have heard that elsewhere. You did not address it directly, you have done so indirectly in all the things you have been raising, but the property taxpayers at the moment across the province are feeling overly burdened and I see their complaint as the root of the tax revolt stuff that is being added to you by provincial and federal actions lately.

Can you tell me what the average property taxpayer pays here in Windsor to support the public system at the moment?

Mr Kilpatrick: I do not have that figure. Mr Dureno might have that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In Sudbury, we are told it is around \$700 of a \$1,400 average.

Mr Kilpatrick: We would be higher than that; I know that. We are one of the higher ones in the province, but I do not know what the exact figure is. We could get that figure for you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be very interested to know it because, as you indicate,

you are getting 34 per cent provincial dollars, and if you have got a tax base which is being highly stretched, that would be problematic.

There is another thing I would like to hear some comment on. Windsor is really a kind of special town in the sense of being one-industry dominated, an industry which is known to rise and fall dramatically. I was wondering if you could tell us what happens in terms of fluctuation of the local tax base either on property tax for individual home owners or on the commercial tax base and what impact that has had on you as a board over the years.

Mr Kilpatrick: I can start and then Mr Dureno or Mr Payne could maybe add comments. With the auto industry and what has happened over the last number of years since 1982, things have been fairly good. When the auto industry goes in its cyclical patterns, we have tremendous arrears in the tax base, we have a number of bankruptcies that take place and we find that we have to budget for those. Mr Dureno will have the exact figures of how much we have lost in some years, but we fluctuate quite a bit more than other industries in other towns. If the projections are accurate on what is happening in the auto industry with the turndown, we could be into problems not this year but in our next year's budget. Mr Dureno could probably answer in more detail.

Mr Dureno: I guess the major concern would be the affordability of homes and the ability to pay taxes by the home owners of the city rather than the industry. I guess it is a two-edged sword with the industry when it is major like this. They tend on a short basis not to go out of business so they still have the tax base but the layoffs that occur because of that creates a great difficulty on the part of a lot of the people in the city to pay their taxes. There is a lot of pressure on home owners when those times do come.

Of course, there are the peripheral industries where there is a lot of layoffs. During the downturns, we are affected on the smaller side by a lot of the smaller businesses going out of business and not being able to keep up their bills. I guess we are affected more directly as the recession does hit because of the concentration of the large industry.

Mr Payne: There is another point. It just occurred in this past year with the city now in fair market value assessment. I think it was in this past year that our large industries are appealing their taxation support and a decision was made by the appeal board last year for one of the large automotive companies, I believe it was Ford. What did that cost us, Bob, \$700,000?

Mr Dureno: There was a write-off of over \$2 million that was associated with the reassessment in the city. We have just got word that there has been a write-off from Hiram Walker of \$287,000, our share, and we found out that the city wants us to write them a cheque immediately on that to reimburse for that. We just learned about that two days ago. Those are the kinds of problems you have when you are involved with large industry.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just as a final short point on that, what will the effect of regionalized pooling be on that fact of life for you as a board? Have you done any calculations on that in terms of various companies that might be affected that you will be getting fewer taxes from? It probably will not hit the property taxpayers themselves because your ratepayers will stay the same.

1030

Mr Dureno: I do not believe we have done any analysis to indicate that this is going to materially affect us. It is going to be shared with the separate school board. I guess it is the end product, which is the recovery from the province because of that lost assessment, that is of more concern to us. If the competition between the two boards remains as it has the past, we would hopefully not see a rise in the mill rate as a result of this, but with the duplication of services there is going to be more pressure on the commercial assessment to absorb more of the cost. That may be a negative in the long run.

The Chairman: Just before we go to Mrs O'Neill and Mr Keyes, I would direct, for members' attention, that at 1045, instead of Diane Pouget, we will have the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 1.

Mr Cozens: Madam Chairman, could I ask you to accept a humble request? Perhaps if everyone spoke closer to their microphones and if you had this thing turned up just a little, it would be better. We are getting more hotel noise from the back. It is not polite to complain, but your microphone has been the poorest. We are here to listen and to learn. Thanks.

The Chairman: Thank you. We have had a request from the audience to pull our microphones closer. I think Hansard will turn up the volume slightly. Is that better, sir?

Mr Cozens: That is better. Thank you.

The Chairman: Okay. I will do my best.

Mr Cozens: I will wave my hand.

The Chairman: Okay. If I see you waving frantically, I will know what it is for.

Mrs O'Neill: I thought the Windsor Board of Education would have won its battle with the city of Windsor by now. That seems to have been such a long-standing situation and it seems to be really entrenched now.

I am very happy that you brought a couple of recommendations forward that we have heard in other areas, such as the revisions necessary in the capital grant plan and the fiscal year-end. I also want to thank you for the very strong focus that your brief has. It does not leave many stones unturned but goes to them directly.

I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. The \$500,000 regarding the Ontario health insurance plan change, is that in addition to what you are paying now?

Mr Kilpatrick: It is \$900,000 and it is in addition to what we are paying now.

Mrs O'Neill: Oh, it is \$900,000 in addition to all of the collective agreements.

Mr Kilpatrick: Yes. That is correct.

Mrs O'Neill: What percentages were you paying in your collective agreements, generally speaking?

Mr Dureno: We were paying 100 per cent of the premium cost for our benefits, so that is not a part of the calculation, but we have always encouraged our employees to use spousal exemptions where they can. Of course, in the city of Windsor a lot of the companies do pay their premium for all benefits including OHIP, and, where possible, we encourage our employees to have their spouses covered at the industries in the city where their spouses may be working.

In addition, in boards of education in general, there are a lot of spouses working for the same organization and in the past you paid an OHIP premium for one of them. But now, with the new legislation, of course, regardless of spousal exemptions and regardless of the fact that you may have two people who are married working for the board, we would have to pay the premium on all of that. That is really where the additional cost comes in.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you. You seem to be going directly to program funding. I want to ask you a couple of questions about that. First of all, do the associations you belong to support that carte blanche or are you standing somewhat alone in that?

Mr Dureno: I think the concept of program funding can be very difficult if it is taken to the nth degree, in that you would end up with a very complicated system if you are going to use that in a discrete manner to differentiate between school

boards. But I think there are enough differences around the province and in communities that you could address that on more of a global basis, particularly in some of the major programs. I think there are some measurement tools that could be used to do that and I think the organizations that we belong to would, in general, support the idea of differentiation in these grant ceilings because of program.

There is some concern of going to a detailed method of program funding. We are not advocating that, but we think there has to be a system developed that does recognize the differences in programs offered by each board. It may be developed more in the way of weighting factors. With the resources the ministry has available, I am sure it could come up with schemes to identify the needs of boards and recognize those through the grant process.

Mrs O'Neill: One final question: Have you any comments on the new method of identifying the funding for the trainable retarded that has begun this year?

Mr Dureno: I can recall when boards were first made responsible for the operation of the trainable retarded programs. I think it was back in 1969. At that time, the funding level was 80 per cent right across all costs. Then that was folded into the operation of boards and there was a new method developed, but it was separated to ensure that we did have separate funding and it could easily be identified.

Our fear is, as with other programs, that with the folding in of that grant into the general distribution we are, in the long run, going to lose money. That money could easily be diverted to other programs. We are concerned, because that program is such a high-cost program, that the change in the method of segregating those funds will have negative effects on boards that offer those programs.

The Chairman: Although we have technically run out of time, we do have both Mr Keyes and Mr Villeneuve. If we could keep the questions to the briefer side.

Mr Keyes: I will pass to Mr Villeneuve, since his party has not had a question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How accommodating.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you very much.

Mrs O'Neill: It is Monday morning.

Mr Villeneuve: I appreciate that tremendously. Thank you for your presentation. One thing that concerns me very much that you mentioned in your brief was that the more militant boards seem to be receiving more government largess. Is

that whether they need it or not? Do you see some boards being more militant than others with real needs or are they perceived needs?

Mr Kilpatrick: I think in the area of capital needs that is the case. If you look at what is happening in Essex county and what happened in Windsor versus our county boards, in Windsor we took a very positive stand that while we did not agree at all with the funding of the Roman Catholic separate system, because of the large percentage of Roman Catholic taxpayers in the city of Windsor we worked very closely with our coterminous board in making it work. In the county they took the opposite view. They said: "To hell with it. We will fight you at every turn." They have come out a lot better than we have.

A lot of people are now starting to question the way we went, really; biting the bullet and being told, "Work and things will happen; it will be positive for your city," is not taking place. New schools are going up in the county, with possibly more new schools in the future. In the city of Windsor nothing is happening other than that we have schools that are in disrepair, we have a Roman Catholic system that is having problems funding its system and we are just starting to question it. People are starting to say, "Hey, why co-operate, because if you do not co-operate you will probably get more?" We want to make that very clear today, not only for the media but for this committee. Is it really fair what is happening? Yes, I would say they are being treated differently.

Mr Villeneuve: I appreciate your making that comment, because it is the first, I believe, since we have been on the road show here that someone has brought that to our attention in a very precise way.

Finally, you mentioned that you would like to see the government go up to 60 per cent of the total cost of funding the board. The remaining 40 per cent—

Mr Mahoney: The approved cost.

Mr Keyes: They were very good. They said "approved."

Mr Villeneuve: That is a little different from what we had heard.

Mr Dureno: That is what I said.

Mr Kilpatrick: It says in here, "in the approved areas."

Mr Keyes: That is right, thank you. They are very supportive.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They did not throw in the teachers' pensions like some groups do these days.

Mrs O'Neill: They agree with us.

Mr Villeneuve: Anyway, back to the 40 per cent which will be funded locally, and of course we know taxpayers pay the entire shot in somewhat different forms, would you have that continue entirely based on real estate holdings or would you suggest that possibly we should go to some sort of deviation from that to income tax or other forms of revenue; or would you stay strictly with real estate as it now is and to some degree is not all that equitable?

Mr Keyes: Thanks for asking my question.

Mr Kilpatrick: I would think on the real estate value. I am sure Mr Dureno could expand on it in more detail, but I would think real estate.

1040

Mr Dureno: The board really has not debated this, but in some discussions we have had I think we feel that the property tax, in a general sense, perhaps is not as regressive as has been professed in the past. We think the property tax is still a good method of collecting the local share as long as the provincial government picks up its fair share of the cost.

Mr Villeneuve: You realize that the government recognized many years ago that in agriculture, for instance, a farm tax rebate or tax credit came back to owners of farm land because it was not equitable for them to support education in that particular manner. You are quite satisfied, based on primarily residential accommodation and other such assessment, that it would be reasonably equitable?

Mr Dureno: Yes.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Kilpatrick, to you and your colleagues for giving us an insight into some of the needs of the city of Windsor.

Mr Kilpatrick: Thank you for listening to our concerns.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by Donna Waspe. Come forward, please. Perhaps I could ask the party at the back just to move outside. Thank you.

The Chairman: Good morning, Mrs Waspe. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated 15 minutes for your presentation time. Hopefully, that will allow for a question or two from the members. Please begin whenever you are ready.

DONNA WASPE

Mrs Waspe: I am a concerned parent from Sandwich West township, where funding has become a very large issue in my community. This is why I am glad to have the opportunity to

speak to you this morning to express my concerns about the pressures being put on us, on our municipal tax base, by the provincial government.

I am sure that when the Ontario government implemented full funding, it never considered our county schools. We have a community school system, and due to our unique geographical locations, our schools are all community-oriented.

We have now had to provide two separate smaller school systems at the secondary level in three different locations in Essex county. The costs of operating our original public schools, running at maximum enrolment, is now the same or even more for our board of education even though some of our schools have now dropped to two-thirds enrolment. If you combine this cost of the duplication of services in Essex county with the extra cost of maintaining our programming required by the ministry, you can understand the strain it has put on our board.

At a time when our educators are saying Canada is technically poor and recommending we channel more of our students into technical studies, which cost the public board more than a straight academic program, we find our provincial support for education falling back every year and lowering or eliminating our grants.

We must also consider the cost to our board to support a much-needed vocational school in our county. These children deserve and need this specialized training so that they can be prepared to compete for the jobs in today's marketplace. After falling through the cracks in an academic program and being made to feel inadequate at times, this specialized and supportive teaching they receive, I believe, is worth every penny.

To be forced to close a school of this type because of inadequate funding would mean these students would have to go to a different school and would be unable to take some of the courses available, unless they were prepared to spend one to two hours each day on a bus. I am sure you will agree that this time could be better spent in the classroom.

You should also be considering the cost to re-educate or provide social assistance to our students if we do not educate them properly the first time.

The effects of forcing us to transfer our community schools has had a backlash on our community through business development and property values. This affects all the people in our area. We did not create any of these situations and I do not think it is fair that we should be

penalized for them either. We are only asking to be treated fairly in regard to the funding. As a taxpayer who supports a board that has managed to stay within its budget despite hardships, I would not also like to support anyone who has a definite deficit financial budget.

As one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada, I find it disheartening that instead of leading the nation in education, we have fallen to the bottom of the scale in provincial education commitments. We must be prepared to keep in step with the rest of Canada by making a stronger commitment to tomorrow's leaders. As a parent and a taxpayer, I would rather invest in the future now by spending a few dollars than pay for the consequences later.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you give me an idea of what your property tax levels are and what percentage of your property tax goes to education in the county?

Mrs Waspe: This year I think I am paying \$1,080 just to education and about \$800 in municipal.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is a pretty big tax bite. I guess we can ask the board if you do not know. Do you know what percentage of the costs of education are being assumed by the province for the county?

Mrs Waspe: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will ask the board this afternoon; that is fine.

Some provinces have moved to a very different system. In Quebec, 90 per cent of the costs of education are assumed by the provincial government; in British Columbia it is 80 per cent and in New Brunswick it is 100 per cent. I wonder what your thoughts are. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to ask the board because, in its last comments, it thought the property tax was a fair system of paying for the education system and seemed to think it was not regressive, that it had some connection, I suppose, with people's ability to pay.

What are your thoughts on that, whether paying \$1,000 in property tax towards the schools is a fairer way to fund the school system than, say, having most of it come out of the provincial tax dollars, out of income tax?

Mrs Waspe: In a county, we are more spread out so we have a lower concentration of population compared to a city. In a city like Toronto where they are really well packed, I suppose your municipal taxes could cover it, but in the county we just do not have that kind of population. Even though we have got a big

growth in Sandwich West, we still do not have anything to compare with a big city.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is a higher dollar amount that you are paying for your tax than I am paying in the city of Toronto, that is certainly true, and it is also a slightly higher percentage. I think we are paying 54 per cent now. I think it is around 54 per cent of our property tax that goes into education at the moment.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you very much for your presentation. I gather you are in a semirural or fully rural area in Sandwich West.

Mrs Waspe: Semirural.

Mr Villeneuve: In your own mind, do you see some duplications, ie, could there be better use of some of the technical courses by both public and separate boards? Do they share, by the way? Is there some sharing?

Mrs Waspe: The separate board does send students to the public secondary schools for technical programs, but right now there is such friction going on that I do not know if they do it as much as they should be.

Mr Villeneuve: That may well be one of the areas we have to address, the possibility of sharing transportation, technical and what have you. That may well be a very logical area where, without reducing the services that are being provided, we could maximize the use and the efficiency. You would say that there is an area we could look at to possibly get boards working together and sharing some of the facilities and some of the programs that exist.

Mrs Waspe: I am sure you could. I think it always depends on how well your boards of education get along with each other.

Mr Villeneuve: You perceive that there is friction there beyond what there should normally be?

Mrs Waspe: I am afraid that this year there is very big friction lately.

Mr Villeneuve: I was afraid you would say that.

Mr Reycraft: I want to make sure I understand what you mean about the need for a vocational school in Essex county. I am aware of the school that the county operates in the Amherstburg area. Is it West Park?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Western.

Mr Reycraft: That is Western. Is that the kind of school you are referring to or are you talking about a secondary school with all technical education?

Mrs Waspe: No, strictly vocational school.
1050

Mr Reycraft: Is that school's future threatened now?

Mrs Waspe: There is a drop in enrolment. The separate board now is not referring students there like it used to. I do not know why. There is always a certain proportion of students who need vocational training. You can only go by rumours that they are not being referred there. It is all a numbers game in the county anyway.

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, Mrs Waspe, I would like to thank you for your presentation today. We have not had a lot of input from parents to date, so it is particularly valuable for us and we really commend you for your initiative in coming forward to air some of your concerns in this area.

We have had a substitution for the next presentation, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 1. Because they are substituting for a presentation that was 15 minutes long, they have agreed to abide by those time lines as well. Please be seated.

Welcome to our committee. We are very pleased we were able to accommodate you at the last moment and fit you into our schedule because we are sure you have many valuable insights to provide us with. Would you begin by introducing yourselves for the purpose of Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION, DISTRICT 1

Mr Walsh: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you to the committee for fitting us in on such short notice. My name is Michael Walsh. I am the president of District 1, OSSTF. With me is Mary Jane Gallagher, a past president of our district. Mary Jane is going to make the bulk of our presentation.

Mrs Gallagher: The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is pleased to have this opportunity to submit a brief to the select committee on education. We are here today on behalf of more than 700 members of District 1, teachers in the employ of the Board of Education for the City of Windsor.

As teachers, we experience at first hand the effects of decisions regarding financing of our educational system. We cheer and welcome the government's statements of commitment to maintaining and improving Ontario's fine educational system and programs. We shake our heads in frustration when we see those commitments

implemented with continued reductions in the provincial share of the cost of education.

The effects of this shift of responsibility from the provincial Treasury to the local taxpayer will ultimately be felt, we fear, in the classroom. Smaller supply budgets, fewer new and replacement textbooks, a restriction of field trip activities, a reduction of program and the existence of more crowded and outdated facilities are but a few of the results that will make it increasingly difficult for our teachers to meet the needs of our students and the changing demands of their parents and our society.

It is our intention, in this submission, to address several areas of concern regarding recent financing decisions and proposals.

The pooling of commercial and industrial assessment with coterminous boards: The teachers of District 1, like our board, recognize that with the extension of funding to separate schools, some form of pooling is probably inevitable. We recall, however, our government's continued statements that the cost of this extended funding would not be borne by the public system. We also specifically recall the government's commitment that the viability of the public system would be maintained.

Clearly, a decision to pool assessments is a result of the increased demands for support for the Catholic school system. The government's provision of compensation for those public boards, like Windsor, which will lose the greatest amounts is obviously an attempt to implement those earlier protective promises. Our teachers have real concerns, however, about the final result of this compensation. What will happen if the real losses incurred by public boards are greater than those predicted? In examining the cost estimates provided by the provincial government, it would seem to us that those predictions are exceedingly conservative.

These estimates were based on the 1988 tax year. They do not take into account the growth in raw assessments that will have occurred by 1990. They also do not compensate for the fact that the new 1989 grant plan increases the unapproved portion of ordinary expenditures by 40 per cent. These additional costs must be carried by a much smaller assessment base, so the effect on the taxpayer will increase by a greater proportion.

The effects of this pooling are increased once again by the inclusion of telephone and telegraph revenues in the pooling, items that were not part of a model presented earlier. Finally, the shift in assessment base is permanent and our teachers

seek some reassurance that compensation to the hardest hit boards will have a similar time line.

The teachers of District 1 recommend that the government look again for a means by which it can live up to its commitment to public education. Perhaps it is time to pool services and costs, as well as assessment, between coterminous boards. We respectfully suggest that the concept of a unified public-separate school board should be examined again, with a view towards using educational resources more directly for the benefit of students.

Grant changes for 1989: In examining these changes, teachers note that once again these reforms involve a substantial downloading of education costs from the provincial Treasury to the local taxpayer. The government has added a 6.1 per cent increase to the general legislative grant. However, 2.1 per cent of that increase is designated for throne speech initiatives and an additional two per cent is designed to compensate for increasing enrolments. This leaves a two per cent increase in grants towards the regular expenditures of school boards. Cost-of-living increases would suggest that boards can expect a six per cent to seven per cent increase in cost. This leaves a considerable shortfall in funding.

Also, if real costs are rising at a rate between six per cent and seven per cent and the increase in ordinary expenditure ceiling is only 4.3 per cent, the gap between grant ceilings and actual per pupil costs will continue to grow.

A third element in the grant structure increases dramatically the portion of below-ceiling costs borne by the ratepayer by effecting a huge 19.3 per cent increase in the mill rate required for the local share. Estimates indicate this amounts to as much as a \$350,000 education property tax increase in 1989. Inasmuch as the government is offering \$200 million over six years to compensate for pooling, it would appear to us that boards are being compensated with their own money. Once again, a much greater share of the cost of education has been shifted to the local property tax.

The teachers of District 1 recommend that the government initiate procedures that will immediately move its funding of education towards the 60 per cent level, as promised in the last election.

District 1 notes that within the 1989 general legislative grant plan, the government has abandoned its commitment to fund education on the basis of enrolment. The province has informed school boards that if the actual enrolment increase in the province is in excess of the prediction, all boards can expect a reduction in

per pupil grants to limit the GLG to the amount committed. Unfortunately, the government has not found a similar way in which to limit the costs of educating these additional students.

District 1 also believes that operating grants should be linked more directly to the costs of providing programs. We note that in Windsor, as predicted in our presentations to the planning and implementation committee a few years ago, the public board continues to provide more students with high-cost educational programs, while the Catholic board receives the identical per pupil grants for students enrolled in much less expensive programs.

With regard to the shift of trainable retarded, I would point out to the members of this committee that the Windsor public board has a very extensive trainable retarded program which is seen as one of the better programs or strengths in the province. We lead the way and we are very proud of it.

Unfortunately, in looking at that shift in grants, we believe that essentially the boards that are going to suffer most from that change from an actual program-linked grant to a general grant to all boards are going to be boards like ours that offer the program. The boards that do not offer the program get the grants, while we carry a significantly higher portion of the expenses.

District 1 recommends that funding provided to boards be linked directly to both enrolment and costs of program actually provided by the boards.

Capital grants: The members of District 1 believe there is a major flaw in the capital grant formula now being used. Critical needs for major renovations and replacements of existing facilities are being ignored as the government responds to the pressure for new schools in expanding population areas near Toronto. Ministry formulas for determining pupil spaces available are hopelessly out of touch with the realities of class-size provisions in current collective agreements and the space needs of many of the new special programs in our schools. This translates into schools in Windsor with leaking roofs, outdated science labs and bricks that fall off buildings.

District 1 urges the government to establish a separate capital allocation for school renovation and replacement and that this separate allocation be adequately funded through additional provincial commitment of funds.

In conclusion, again, we would like to thank the members of this committee for taking the time to hear our brief. We take great pride in Ontario's fine school system, and in Windsor's

public high schools in particular. Our teachers want to continue to be part of a system that offers the very best educational development possible to our students. Unfortunately, the financial pressures being placed on our schools make this goal increasingly difficult to attain.

1100

The Chairman: I am pleased that you made your presentation in such a concise and very direct way. We have a number of members who have questions and we have about seven minutes. We have Mr Mahoney, Mr Johnston and Mr Villeneuve, so if I could ask for a showing of coterminous party solidarity, perhaps you would split your time equally. I do not know what three into seven is but—

Mr Mahoney: If you let us go, we will. The concerns we have heard around the province, and we are hearing it again today, is the issue of ceilings and the cost over the ceilings that the boards are facing. Are you familiar with what percentage of the cost would be overceiling in your board? What is the major factor driving that cost?

Mrs Gallagher: I do not have the specific value from the Windsor board. I should have it, but it has escaped me at the moment. If you take a look at the fact that almost without exception, boards right across the province are substantially over the ceiling, the major factor driving that in my mind is that the ceilings are set too low to represent any significant portion of the cost of educating a student in our province today.

Mr Mahoney: We have heard some people say that it is the programs that are actually driving the overceiling. Other people have suggested that perhaps it is things that show up in the collective agreements, whether preparation time or the number of teachers in the system. Although we have not had anyone say that publicly, I hear that rumbling. I just cannot seem to get a sense if that is true. Would it be program or would it be actual labour costs and collective agreement costs?

Mrs Gallagher: One of the facts of education is that a significant portion of every school board's budget is the cost of labour. Teaching children is a labour-intensive activity. I submit to you that it is a combination of program and labour costs. All of those costs essentially represent fair and reasonable costs of providing education to the children of our province. It does not change the fact that, quite simply, the provincial government is putting fewer and fewer dollars into support of education.

Mr Mahoney: I am not debating a particular item on that. I just want to know what the costs are in a given area. I do not comment on the propriety of that.

Just briefly, I found it interesting that you have come out and in essence called for a unified public-separate school board examination. I hear a lot of the public saying that, but I have not heard too many professionals within the education system actually saying it. Thank you for that comment.

Mr Walsh: Just a little further to that, something else that might be examined in this local area is not just the unifying of the coterminous boards, but perhaps all of the boards in Essex county. There may well be some saving in costs in the running of education in this area if the Silcox report, which recommended that this happen at all levels of local government, be relooked at.

Mr Mahoney: It almost sounds like regional government.

Mr Keyes: County.

Interjections.

Mr Mahoney: I am not trying to stir anything up; relax.

Mr Villeneuve: That is something new.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In legislative terms, that is an awful lot easier to do. Neither is simple, but regionalizing administration is a lot easier than doing it between coterminous boards for constitutional reasons, as I am sure you are aware. As a committee, I think we would be wise to spend our time looking at functional co-operation that can be organized between the boards rather than trying to get into that constitutional debate again, because I am not sure that that would serve us particularly well.

I want to go back to this issue of property tax again and get OSSTF's local position on this. When property taxes were they were first developed, they were developed as a notion of how to pay for part of the hard services required to maintain a community. That was the basic principle behind them. You have a building that you live in and you need services to that building and that is how the municipal tax base began.

The education component of that has slipped a long way from being connected with capital at all and is now almost entirely paying for operational costs. In some parts of the province, it is paying for the entire cost of the operation of the school system, as in Metropolitan Toronto, the Sault and Ottawa. In your case, the bulk of the costs of

operating education is coming from the local taxpayers.

Do you have any comments about a major shift in the system, given the capital renovation problem that exists out there, to having a new formula developed where the property tax base would go primarily towards capital replenishment and upgrading, to those costs—that would tie in very nicely with development fees, if you will, for new buildings—and the operational cost would, like in other provinces, almost entirely fall on the provincial level of taxes that are developed at the provincial side of things?

Mr Walsh: I think I could agree entirely with that statement, but it would appear to me that the government realizes that putting the burden on the local taxpayer is the sort of easy political solution, because the local populace is then angry at the local school board rather than angry at the government level of funding.

Mr Mahoney: They are angry at us too.

Mr Walsh: Not over that issue they are not. They should be but they are not. They are angry at their local school board and that is where their anger gets directed.

This suggestion that the capital stock would be looked after by the local ratepayer whereas the funds for running education would be looked after by the province makes eminent sense to me.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One of the huge problems we have, which we have not talked about much this morning, is accountability. At the moment, as you say, they go after the local trustee even if the problem is one that was caused by the provincial government, for lack of funding or whatever. Nobody knows who to get at really. If you had a much clearer definition of responsibilities and accountability, it could be an awful lot easier as well.

By the way, I just learned that your overceiling at the Windsor board is between \$600 and \$700 per pupil at the moment, so you are in the low range of overceiling compared to places like Metro that are a couple of thousand dollars over the ceiling.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you for making a presentation on behalf of your association. The Windsor board made the statement a little earlier that the more militant people were, seemingly the better off they became. I will quote something from the basis of funding section that I would like you to expand on: “—The public board continues to provide more students with high-cost educational programs while the Catholic board receives the identical per pupil grants for students

enrolled in much less expensive programs.” Could you expand on that a little bit?

Mr Walsh: The public board has two vocational schools operating with full vocational programs. There is a very small number of students per class, a much lower pupil-teacher ratio than the rest of the schools and high-cost equipment, high-cost materials because of the nature of the vocational programs. There are technical programs offered in most of the regular high schools and these are programs that are not offered to any extent in the Roman Catholic system. Yet the grants and the money for that does not come in any increased amount to the public board even though those programs are offered. By offering a more streamlined, academic type of program, the Roman Catholic board can keep its costs down and yet still get the same grants as the public board does.

Mr Villeneuve: What concerns me here is that there seems to be an inferior quality of education from one board to the other. Would you see a possibility of sharing facilities, sharing staff, at this stage of the game, which could possibly provide better quality instruction to the pupils, or is there just too much animosity in the system to even consider it?

Mr Walsh: There has not been great animosity in Windsor. In fact, there has been some sharing of programs.

1110

Mrs Gallagher: In addition, in response to that, the animosity, as Mike says, is virtually nonexistent. I would not say there is a difficulty with the quality of the program offered; it is the quantity of the program. The Catholic board in Windsor simply has not made the commitment, for reasons that I am sure it can express in terms of costing and of setting up those kinds of programs, etc, the kind of commitment it takes to mount a major technical program.

There has been some sharing of facilities under the terms of Bill 30 and its incorporation into the Education Act. We have in fact transferred some designated teachers for transfer to the separate system. One of our ongoing frustrations in the district, however, is that we believe that voluntary transfers of our teaching staff have not been met with open arms. It is a commitment, I would say, of our coterminous board to those programs more than it is any difficulty in terms of facilities or staff.

Mr Villeneuve: As you know, the mandate of this committee is to find new and innovative ways and more equitable ways of financing

education. I think your comments in this particular vein are going to be very helpful as we make recommendations. If it came down from on high in a way that could best serve both boards and the students at large, it would be helpful. I think your comments are most appreciated.

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 1, for its contribution to our committee today. We are glad it could be arranged that we were able to squeeze you in.

Mr Walsh: Could I make one last comment? If you think you have a problem in terms of funding of the public system as a result of the extension of funding through Bill 30, I believe you will have much greater problems if there is an extension of funding to private schools. If there is a deterioration in the public system as a result of this, it will be annihilation of the public system if there is extension of funding. If you make any comments in your report on that, I would like you to consider it.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Come forward please.

ESSEX COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Reddam: My name is Ron Reddam and I am the director of education for the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

The Chairman: We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time. As I have mentioned to the previous presenters, if you could save some time during that for members' questions, it would be most appreciated. Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mr Reddam: First of all, the entire presentation I am making has been given to you in print. I will go over it for the sake of entering it into the discussion and debate so that you do not have to read it later. I know you have a tremendous amount of materials and a tremendous amount of time commitment to this project.

We are grateful for the opportunity to address the select committee on education. We hope that the hearings prove useful and that your report will assist the educational community and, in particular, the students of Ontario.

In the Ministry of Education description of the education funding model, circulated in march 1989, the following statements are made:

"Responsibility for financing education in Ontario is shared between the province and local school boards.

"A school board determines its budget and raises its share of costs from property taxes paid to its local municipality.

"The province provides its share in the form of grants."

These are excerpts taken from documents submitted by the ministry. I simply want to point out that although it is down in print, it is not in fact in practice.

"Two principles guide the determination of the provincial grant:

"All school boards must have"—you can underline that word—"equitable financial resources to provide a base level of education programs and services.

"All school boards must make the same tax effort to raise the local share of the costs of providing the base level of education programs and services.

"The provincial funding mechanism for education, known as the general legislative grants, GLG, through a combination of operating and capital grants, attempts to mitigate inequities in access to financing among school boards and communities across the province."

In addition to the two principles that presently guide the determination of the provincial grants, the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board recommends a third principle: All school boards must have equity of educational revenues so that each child in Ontario has comparable educational programs and opportunities.

In March 1989, cabinet approved the introduction of changes to the GLGs that will begin to take effect in this year. The Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board is pleased with this announcement, especially with the overall objective of enhancing equity of funding among school boards in Ontario. We support the government in doing this and encourage all parties to support it likewise.

The Ministry of Education model further states, "Equity of access and fairness of opportunity are the cornerstone objectives of educational finance in Ontario."

At the present time, there is little equity in the financing of education. Assessment-poor boards—I am not talking here about Catholic school boards; I am talking here about assessment-poor boards, mostly rural—cannot match the expenditures of assessment-rich boards. They cannot provide the same programs. They cannot provide the same services. They cannot finance the materials, textbooks and supplies that go into the buildings.

I think Ontario is in a very serious economic situation regarding the financing of education and only a major overhaul is going to save what is, right now, unjustifiable and inexcusable. I have some figures I want to share with you concerning the four boards in this area. I have noted the questions that were asked of the previous speakers. I have these data here for you. It is alarming and it is simply something that should not and cannot exist any further, and I hope this committee, if you do nothing else, will certainly encourage the government to provide that equity.

The changes I am outlining are on page 3. They are not inclusive of all the necessary changes, but I think they are significant of what changes should be made.

I think there are people in Ontario committed to equity. I think the government, and in particular the Ministry of Education, have the personnel and the knowhow to make these things happen. I do not believe every school board is going to have every answer, all of the solutions, but certainly here are some of the ones that we are presenting to you.

The grant ceiling for elementary is \$3,235 and for secondary \$4,122. That needs to be raised and I will tell you why. If we do not change the way funding is going on in schools right now—that is the only equitable way of spreading money around this province. That means every school board gets that amount of money as a ceiling, provided it raises the taxes.

If you keep that ceiling down low and take the rest of the educational dollar and spend it on all kinds of programs, some of which our board cannot afford to even put in—do you know we are going to turn down some programs simply because we cannot afford them? A good example is the textbook one. It is almost idiotic. You have to be spending a high level of money to then get a grant to spend more money. We are not even halfway to that limit, so that grant is totally inaccessible to assessment-poor boards and some are going broke.

I do not think it is a secret. There are at least, I would say, 25 Catholic boards in this province that are on the border of bankruptcy. We ran a deficit. I did not bring you the cuts. If any of you are interested in the cuts we made in our system, the things we had to take out, I will be happy to send them to you. It is incredible what we had to cut out this year to try to balance the budget, but that is maybe for another day.

Second, the compensatory education grant should be stopped immediately. There is almost

no justification for it and there is hardly any accounting for where the money is spent. I am not saying some children do not deserve special programs, but the boards in the big cities have all the money to provide all those programs without any special money going their way to cover the cost of that. We have children in the county who require special programs and we are not getting any money for them. This is not a good form of distribution of money to boards and it should be stopped.

1120

The special incentive grants: Again, the ministry says that we are transferring 6.1 per cent of moneys in grants this year to education. Our board got about two per cent of that. The rest of it goes into these things, because the ministry takes all these special incentive grants off first, and then whatever is left over is distributed to the boards.

Reduction of class size: In our county, that constituted a tremendous cost to our board and we did not put it into its full effect. It is going to come back and hit us over the head next year. Because our schools are jammed, with no room left over, every time they reduce a class, we have to put on an additional classroom. In three schools, that means 30-some portables are going in. The grants we get barely cover the cost of the teachers' salaries.

On top of that, we estimate it would cost us \$10,000 to open up a new classroom, plus \$25,000 for a portable. There is \$35,000 of cost that we do not have. That means our board is going further into debt to provide that incentive. I am all for reduced classes, but surely when they bring in an incentive, they have to cover the cost equitably to all the school boards.

Some school boards in the province already had their class sizes down that far and, as such, they made an argument to the ministry, "Well, we've already done it, so give us the money anyway." These boards are banking anywhere from \$2 million to \$3 million to \$5 million a year in reserves, and yet they get this money dumped on them because we do it to everybody fairly. To me, there is something wrong in Denmark when we spread money around like that, and I think that needs to be looked at seriously.

The purchase of computer hardware is another, and the purchase of textbooks that I mentioned to you, which our board cannot take advantage of. It is there, and it is useless, as far as we are concerned.

Startup costs: Catholic school boards in particular were hit very hard in our board for

starting up high schools, and we are in debt considerably over doing it. There was no provision made for any cost for us to start up a high school. What this in fact said was that another school board that already has a full high school gets a grant per child; those that are starting up a new school get the same grant. For all the brand-new textbooks that had to go in, all the desks, all the equipment and everything else that went in, we had to take it out of our operating cost, while the other boards, which already had all of this, of course, used that money to provide programs. Right there was a tremendous inequity of startup cost to boards.

The sharing of educational funding: Again, you are going to probably hear from everybody that the ministry needs to bring the share up to 60 per cent. Let me tell you, it does not need to do it for everybody. The government may need to redistribute some of its moneys, and certainly if it provides equity, then it may not be necessary for it to shoot right to the 60 per cent model again. Certainly if it is going to provide every board in Ontario with the exact moneys, whether it needs it or not, it will cost our government, our taxpayers, more money. I do not think this is the case. I think some boards need to be given more in the way of grants—and these are the assessment-poor boards again—simply because they cannot match the kind of spending that goes on with the other boards. I will leave that with you.

The board incentive grants: I believe that boards can save money. If no other recommendation comes out of your committee, I would like to see you jump on this one and encourage boards to save money. I am talking about saving the taxpayers money directly and saving the Ministry of Education money; if I can show them that I can save the money, then I would like an incentive put in that some of the savings be left to pay for the additional costs of education in the area.

A good example of that in Essex county between the two boards is busing. Right now we are looking at a joint busing system for both boards. We estimate this may save somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1 million of taxpayers' money. It will do many things. It will improve the service of buses. It will mean that there will not be four buses going down a road; there will be only the number of buses needed to pick up the students.

Both Catholic and non-Catholic children will be picked up in the same bus. We will save bus routes, we will save a safety problem on our highways and we will save taxpayers' money.

We would like some of that money to stay locally if in fact these two boards can get together and make that a possibility. We are already doing it. We are just working on an agreement to make it so.

There are other incentives for boards to save money. There is no particular need to save money now, because you do not get to keep it. If I gave my child \$100 and said, "Take it out and spend it, and whatever is left over, bring it back to me," I doubt very much if it is going to come back to me. If I said to him, "Whatever is left over you can keep," I am sure he would spend it a little differently. I think school boards are no different.

The capital grant plan needs to be changed. It is outdated and simply does not match what is going on in the schools.

Lot levies are okay for the boards in and around Toronto. I wonder if we are creating another two-class system of boards by doing it. I am particularly anxious to make sure that whatever advantages are given to boards over lot levies, it does not allow them to do something that other boards in Ontario cannot do. That takes a little bit of discussion.

Two-panel situations: Where boards are operating two panels, it is almost like sharing a high school. You cannot do it the same as if you have just one facility being used. Something needs to be looked at in that area.

Our board is prepared to do its share to provide quality education and it needs equity of educational funding to ensure that the students of Essex county receive their rightful share of educational programs and services.

Thank you for the opportunity of presenting these views to you, and we hope that your hearings prove to be successful to all the students.

I want to show you something and I will let the rest go. If you look to the green pages, I want to take you through that very quickly and then I will open it up for questions. Do you want to know the comparison of the four boards in this area of spending money? These are pretty rough calculations and they are not driven down to what it costs per child in a school. It simply takes the entire budget of the whole school board, the number of students they have and it divides it and says, "This is basically what it costs per child in that system."

You can see in the elementary how much is being spent on each child in each system. You can see in the secondary what the difference is.

The next page will show you the difference of per-pupil expenditure over our board. I want you to take note particularly of the Windsor public board, which spends \$1,190 per child in elementary school more than we do. That is not a few dollars; that is \$1,190 per pupil. Notice Essex public; it is only \$40 more than we are. I think therein lies the tale of assessment-rich and assessment-poor boards.

Go to the secondary level and look at the difference: \$1,348 more than our board spends per child. The Essex public board is \$3 more.

This is not a separate school issue. It is not even a Bill 30 issue. This is an issue of assessment-poor boards and assessment-rich boards.

If you take a look at the next page, the additional revenue to our board alone, if we spent at the level that the public school boards spent in the city of Windsor, there would be \$10,237,094 that would be in our budget right now. This is in 1988; this is not in 1989 and not in 1990. This is back in 1988; that was the difference. Can you imagine what kinds of programs we could put in our system with \$10 million more? How many more teachers could we hire? How many fewer students in classrooms would we have, and so on?

At the secondary level, there is a difference between the boards. You are certainly welcome to look at that.

The combination of both the elementary and secondary is simply staggering. That is the very last green page. The difference there is that the public school board in the city of Windsor has \$14.5 million more—that is based on the number of students in our system—to spend over us. To me, that has to be stopped.

I understand that when we talk about financing education, we want to be fair to everybody, and I think that there is a long way to go in Ontario. I think the government has started it. I would hope that this committee supports it, and I would hope that you would seriously look at why and what changes need to be made to bring this about.

1130

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. We will start the questioning with Mr Johnston and we will go to Mr Keyes. We have approximately 10 minutes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is good to see you again. Thank you for such a forthright and provocative presentation and for the statistics that go along with it; they are very useful for us.

My first question, which I had written down before you got started, was to talk to you a bit

about the deficit situation. I appreciate that you will send us along the detail of that. It would be very helpful to us if we could see that. It is not something we have heard a lot about. You say 25 Catholic boards may be in this deficit situation presently. My figures were always between 20 and 25; I was never really exactly sure.

Mr Reddam: No, I am not sure either.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Under the law, of course, you are not allowed to run a deficit in operational terms and therefore you have to cut programs. Could you give us a brief runthrough of what you have cut? Has this been a two- or three-year problem for you now?

Mr Reddam: No. It is not only just a two-year problem; it is one which if it is not corrected multiplies itself. It becomes horrendous. We carried over from last year a deficit of about \$1.3 million in the secondary. This year our deficit would have added to that about \$2.3 million. We eradicated that difference and we did some financing to do it. I will send that to you. It is lengthy.

We do not have a deficit for this year, but we still carry that deficit from last year, and had we not taken the step of cutting out programs—when I was talking about cutting programs, all of our schools were reduced immediately to 85 per cent, not of what they asked for, but of what they spent last year. In other words, our schools right now are operating with 15 per cent less of what they operated with last year. So that is about a 20 per cent or 25 per cent drop in actual dollars.

We have cut out services. All of our co-ordinators' and consultants' budgets were cut in half; whatever they had last year, they now have half this year. We have delayed hiring about 10 positions in the secondary simply because we have cut staff. We have cut our school boards in the French areas, in the elementary and the secondary. We have reduced an operating overceiling expenditure of more than \$500,000 in our board alone from last year to this year. This year we expect that we would drop almost \$1 million in operating. It affects every program in our system. There is not one that was left untouched. What scares us is the fact that services at the school base level are hard pressed now and are getting worse.

Mr R. F. Johnston: With that, what is the present percentage of your costs that you have laid down for us here on a per student basis that is picked up by the province? Where do you rank?

Mr Reddam: Up to ceiling, you get the grants to ceiling. Over and above ceiling you get

nothing. You raise all the rest yourself locally. That is why it is important for that ceiling to go up.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So your per-pupil cost, let's say, in the secondary panel is \$5,348 and your grant is \$3,250.

Mr Reddam: Yes, and you make up the rest locally.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have never been very good at math. It is just one of a long series of failings because I spent too long on a schoolbus and learned how to play euchre and a lot of country and western songs. It stood me in good stead for politics, but not much else.

The thing I want to raise, though, is that you are not among the poorest of the boards in terms of the amount of assessment that pays the freight here. There are a number of northern boards which rely much more heavily on provincial dollars. My question comes back to the 60 per cent notion, which a lot of us seem to have tagged on to over the years for some reason or other. It has certainly been our party policy, it has been a Macdonald commission recommendation, Jackson talked about it, etc.

My difficulty is that even within that 60 per cent concept the inequities are going to be enormous if you go for that as an average across the province in terms of the ability of groups to pay and certainly the accountability of boards for those programs. I am wondering if there does not need to be a major shift in terms of the whole concept of financing and where the bucks come from rather than just trying to bump it up to that fairly arbitrary percentage, when you think about it, when you then adjust it across the province.

Mr Reddam: I do not think the government should be forced to be spending 60 per cent every year, because if it cannot control the cost, then how it is going to do anything about it if it has to keep putting in 60 per cent of whatever that cost is? Definitely I think there need to be some safeguards put into the ceilings of expenditures. How can one board spend that much more than another board and yet still even get a grant? If you can raise that money locally, why are you getting more money from the province? It is incredible that the government is still sending them that kind of money.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have been trying to get people to talk a little bit about the methodology for coming at the GLGs, which are basically a unilateral decision now by the government. Given the fact that this has a major impact on taxpayers across the province and questions of

accountability are so blurred, would it not be better if we moved towards some kind of negotiated approach to ceilings and the range of going over ceiling that would be permissible within that?

Mr Reddam: I would agree with it, as long as everybody in the province is treated equally. I am not so much concerned about the 60 per cent. I am more concerned about how much each board is spending. I am more concerned that my board is in debt while another board is putting money in the bank; in reserves. Then they say to us, "Offer the same programs." How can you offer the same programs? It is incredible. You cannot do it.

This is not a Bill 30 issue. This is an issue of saying to every child in Ontario, "You will have comparable educational opportunities." I am saying that every board needs to act exactly the same way; but, on the other hand, I do not think a child in Essex county should get less service than someone in Toronto or someone in Windsor or someone in London.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is a Bill 30 failure. There are only a couple of us here who were on that committee. One of the things that has concerned me since that time is that we spent far less time talking about the capital consequences than we did about the effects on teachers. It seems to me we handled a lot of the problems around the manpower or personpower perspective of things, but we certainly did not handle the whole question about the capital costs for starting up schools, etc.

As the Windsor Board of Education was saying, the squeaky wheel notion became the political reality when all of a sudden dollars started getting dolloped out to boards that were in a major confrontation with each other on a local basis, boards that tried to co-operate got nothing, and real costs were not brought into the picture. I really regret that as a committee we did not get around to that. We spent so much time focusing on the personnel kinds of consequences.

Mr Keyes: I have just a couple of questions relating somewhat to the assessments. First, you are aware that the province does not give the same dollars to every board. If you want to get to the extremes, if you take Metro Toronto, it gets nothing from Ontario because of the rate of assessments they have in Metro. They are funding the full cost of education at whatever level they want to go beyond the ceilings for which they would be eligible. When we were in Ottawa last week, they have about one or two per cent. That is all they get, and they say that this year they will probably be in a negative situation

relative to grants. That brings it then, of course, to one area that we heard of last week where they were up getting 92 per cent of their actual grant costs, I believe.

Have you had a chance to work out the potential improvement in your situation by the pooling of it? When you talk about pooling, could you also give us an idea whether your board supports that it should be done on a regional basis, or should there be some thought that it should all be done on a provincial basis? I think that if we were to try to provide the equity of funding that you are suggesting it might even have to go much further.

Mr Reddam: I think it has to go much further. Let me go back to your first point. No matter where the money comes for for education, it is all tax dollars.

Mr Keyes: That is right.

Mr Reddam: It is tax dollars out of your pocket, whether the provincial government pays it or someone locally does. It is all tax dollars. What I am more concerned about is not the percentage of who gets what grants. That is a fallacy. It is how much dollars they are spending per child. That is where the differences are and that is what needs to be addressed.

On your second question, I agree with you. I think fiddling around with minor changes is not going to produce anything. You cannot do this soon, but I would think that over a period of five or so years major changes need to come in. For example, we are probably the only place left in the world that is allowed to tax people for education, where a school board can actually set a tax and tax the residents. I do not know of too many places in the world that allow a board to do that. I sometimes wonder—we talk about accountability of trustees—if that is equitable any more.

There is the question there about where the tax dollar is coming from. I think you need to start with that premise. How much are boards capable of spending? Boards cry that they do not have money and yet you look at the expenditures they have.

Mr Keyes: You would like to see a limitation on the expenditures of boards regardless of their ability to fund.

Mr Reddam: The ability to fund is there because they spend it.

Mr Keyes: The ability is there based on their assessment. I am thinking of Toronto, once again. The assessment is there. You would like to see a limit placed on it.

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Mr Reddam: The two Windsor boards share the commercial-industrial assessment. Windsor separate is going to get some additional moneys. But what happens when you have two poor-assessment boards sharing? What do they get to share? There is some money kicked in to make sure there is, but that again would not even dent my deficit, let alone bring us up to what other boards are spending.

If you are going to talk about that type of distribution of money, then provincial would be the best way to go, and if you cannot do that for political reasons, then regional would be the least you should do. Having two boards share, to me, is not distribution, in a broad enough sense, to have any impact on us.

Mr Keyes: To adjust the coterminous boards is not adequate for you.

Mr Reddam: It is not adequate. I think it is a step in the right direction, but certainly it is not adequate. I think that a whole new mechanism should come up in the financing of education.

Mr Keyes: I want to congratulate you on the conciseness of the recommendations and particularly the positive one you made with regard to taking into account efficiencies, perhaps with your number six, and in particular the single transportation system and single purchasing. I have often felt single resource centres for teachers, etc, would be an ideal one as well.

I wonder if you could just give two quick comments. One, have you any idea of the pupil-teacher ratio in your elementary and secondary systems? From what you have just said about the number of positions you have not filled, I might make an invalid assumption that it is certainly significantly higher than your partner coterminous board in the city.

Mr Reddam: At the secondary level, ours is at 17-1. That includes technical, all programs. Some boards at the secondary will have four different systems of numbers. They start at 16.5-1 for their general academic courses and are down to 11-1 or 12-1 for specialized courses. Ours is 17-1 covering the whole system. So you have to be careful when you ask for figures. In the elementary level, we are running at about 28 students per class.

Mr Keyes: You are saying it is about 28-1 in the elementary. I think there are very significant differences between the pupil-teacher ratios, and therein lies a lot of the difference of funding.

What is your comment on the need or potential, as you have been suggesting, of

sharing things such as single transportation purchasing? Is there any merit in still looking at that for some of the specialized programming, or do you feel that it should still be the prerogative of each independent board to provide independent programs of special needs?

Mr Reddam: I think there should be incentives to school boards to reduce costs. If they can reduce costs by sharing the things that you are talking about, then they should be encouraged to do so. Right now, there is no real encouragement there for boards to do that. So everybody builds his own kingdom. Why share? Why go through the trouble and the aggravation of sharing if you get nothing out of it? The money then goes back to Toronto.

All I am saying is that if it stayed locally and were allowed to assist boards, it could be worked out. I think this government is prepared to do that. I think they need that encouragement to do it, but from everybody. Our two boards in Essex county share the same building.

Mr Keyes: You share the same building.

Mr Reddam: We share the same administration building. We have a joint media centre, a joint courier system and a joint computer program. They do all our computer programs. Right now, we are handling all the transportation. They are going to handle all our purchasing, if we get this agreement signed, and I think we will.

In the business section of boards, there is no reason on this earth why we cannot save money in combining. In the academic—and you know the question of separate school boards and their constitutional rights—that is something I do not believe can happen, at least not in my lifetime. But certainly all the business functions of boards can be put together. There is no reason for five boards to be operating a busing schedule. There is nothing RC or not RC about that at all. To me, we should provide incentives for them to get together on a business level.

For example, in the Ottawa area, I think it is ludicrous to have provided a fifth board up there. I think they could have provided a two-tiered system with all the business administration under one board and then allowed the other boards to operate their programs underneath that one system. To have five separate business sections, to me, is a total waste of money.

Mr Keyes: Thank you very much for the very strong endorsement of sharing, particularly at the business level.

The Chairman: Mr Reddam, on behalf of the committee, I would very much like to thank you

for the contribution and the insights you have brought to our hearings today.

Our next presentation will be by Mrs Margaret Wisner. Mrs Wisner, could you come forward, please. Good morning and welcome to our committee. Members do have a copy of the written brief that you have submitted. We have allocated 15 minutes for your presentation time. Please begin whenever you are ready.

MARGARET WISNER

Mrs Wisner: Thank you and good morning. To introduce myself, I should tell you that I am a taxpayer in Sandwich West township. I am the parent of two elementary schoolchildren and one university student.

I would first like to say that I am very pleased that the Minister of Education is now responsible for Colleges and Universities as well. I anticipate that this will result in some streamlining, better co-operation between secondary and post-secondary institutions, a better fit between courses at the two levels and, I hope, more uniform senior secondary school grading standards. Improvements in these areas would, I believe, decrease college and university dropout rates and the associated social and financial costs.

Now to the topics at hand. In commenting on educational financing, I would like to deal with adequacy, equity and accountability, in that order.

First of all, adequacy: For more than a decade, the provincial contribution to the budgets of local school boards has dropped steadily. I have seen the effects of this personally, as a property taxpayer, in the increase in the percentage of my taxes assigned to education and as a parent of school-aged children in the increasing need of the schools for financial help from parents' groups to supplement barebones school budgets.

A larger and larger proportion of taxpayers are not current users of the school systems. More and more are seniors on fixed incomes who are not able to pay higher and higher property taxes to offset provincial shortfalls in funding.

Board of education budgets are also growing because of new programs that boards are now required to implement. The integration of mentally and physically handicapped students into the local schools and local classrooms is good but expensive, and the provincial government must be willing to provide not just implementation grants but also a regular annual funding to cover the costs of extra staff and equipment needed to

operate the programs, costs which I believe used to be covered by other government departments.

Other optional programs which many boards have begun are not always really optional. If one local board offers junior kindergarten or French immersion programs, for instance, the coterminous board may have to offer the same programs or lose students at the junior kindergarten level, who would then be likely to stay in the other school system for the rest of their elementary and secondary school years. These are all reasons why the provincial government must fulfil its last election promise to return its level of educational funding to 60 per cent.

These comments have concerned operating finances. With regard to capital finances, I think it is quite reasonable for the government to fund new school construction at a lower level than the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities. In Windsor and Essex county, many existing school buildings are quite old and expensive to operate, but new buildings, designed for energy efficiency and suited to current needs, would be much less costly to run.

As well, if the government should decide to extend the school year into the summer months, I expect the government would be also prepared to finance the installation of air-conditioning into schools. This is not known as the Banana Belt without good reason.

1150

Now to the topic of equity. I do support the use of grants to equalize educational opportunities between different regions of the province. I know that the grant structure is very complex, but it is my understanding that grants for technical programs are not adequate to cover costs. This causes financial inequities when one board in an area provides most of the technical programs. Equity to me means that grants must properly reflect the costs of delivering particular programs. Equity to me also means that if specialized programs are made available, they must be open to all students, which means that the public school boards must provide them.

The Roman Catholic separate schools provide confessional religious instruction to their students, something that public school students cannot receive, and public school parents for the most part do not want in their schools but must provide at their own expense through their religious institutions. I think it quite reasonable for separate school taxes to be higher than public school taxes to reflect these added financial burdens which public school parents and boards must bear.

Finally, on the topic of accountability, for educational financing to be accountable, those who spend the money must be accountable to those who provide it. On this basis, I would oppose the pooling of commercial and industrial assessments. Those who finance business and industry have a right to see their school tax dollars in the system where they have electoral representation, where they have a say in the spending decisions.

Local property taxpayers also help to pay the income taxes and the sales taxes that the provincial government returns to the school boards in grants. I understand that some school boards have accumulated large deficits and are now looking for government help. I hope that such help is not forthcoming, since it can only be at the expense of fiscally responsible boards which have never had the benefit of such bailouts. Accountability requires that the provincial government and the boards of education, which are jointly responsible for education policy and the delivery of programs, be accountable to local taxpayers in the use of their tax dollars.

I thank all of you for coming to Windsor today and I appreciate having this opportunity to speak to you. If you have any questions, I will do my best to answer them.

The Chairman: We apologize for the noise next door. Apparently there is a convention and it has slightly gone beyond our control at any rate, and beyond anybody else's, it appears.

Mrs O'Neill: Rather than a question, I would like to go to page 3. I have quite a bit of difficulty with your statement, "Those who finance business and industry have a right to see their school tax dollars in the system where they have electoral representation." I have no idea upon what you are basing that statement, since I would suggest that there are many people who are separate school supporters who either own businesses or have a direct influence in them. Separate school ratepayers certainly purchase major parts of their community and support major parts of their community with their commercial activity. I am having a lot of trouble with that statement.

Mrs Wisner: I am not suggesting that the public board should have all the commercial and industrial assessment. What I am suggesting is that those who have businesses have the right to choose where their assessment goes.

Mrs O'Neill: That is going to be the case.

Mrs Wisner: Not as a giant pool that is split according to the way the government wants it to

be split, but rather according to those who are providing the dollars. Do you see a problem there?

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, I see a great problem because it is going to be split on the basis of the residential assessment, which certainly reflects the population of any given community.

Mrs Wisner: But it may not reflect the economic activity of those taxpayers.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess we are going to have to agree to disagree on this one.

Mr Mahoney: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: Could I suggest that we ask Mr Irwin if he would be prepared to come back at 1:45 or something when we could better hear what is going on? Presumably that lunch will be over.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If I know Rotary lunches, it will be very close to two o'clock, I would think.

The Chairman: Apparently our clerk has discovered that the luncheon next door is supposed to be over at 1:30. If Mr Irwin is willing to come back at 1:45, that might be more appropriate. If he is not available, then we are certainly willing to continue right now.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is not much noisier than the Legislature on a good day.

Mr Keyes: Not as noisy, you should say. Is Mr Irwin here?

Mr D. Irwin: I heard my name. I am a farmer and I have a business to run. I have taken half a day now that I cannot afford.

The Chairman: We are happy to hear you after Mrs Wisner's presentation then.

Mr D. Irwin: As a suggestion, could this partition be drawn and everybody moved up in here?

The Chairman: Let's finish off with Mrs Wisner's presentation. Do any other members of the committee have questions at this time?

Mr Reycraft: If I could just ask, it is difficult to fully evaluate Mrs Wisner's recommendations without knowing something about her background. Could you give us a little information about what you do and which school system you support?

Mrs Wisner: At the moment, I am a housewife. I have children in school. I do a lot of volunteer work with the schools, with my church and so on. I am a taxpayer in Sandwich West township. As I said, I have two children in the elementary school.

Mr Reycraft: In the public school?

Mrs Wisner: Yes. I have one son who has just entered university this year. What else would you like to know?

The Chairman: Would this be the Essex county public school board?

Mrs Wisner: Yes, Sandwich West is in Essex county. I have one child in each of two elementary schools in Essex county because I have one child in French immersion and one in the English program. Does that help?

Mr Reycraft: That does.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your contribution today. We do apologize again for the distractions and admire the fact that you persevered in spite of them.

I would like to start by thanking all our very willing workers here from the Ministry of Education, lobby groups, local Windsor associations and actually from the Legislature, so we have done quite well in a co-operative model today.

Mr Irwin, I hope that reduces the noise somewhat. I apologize again for the delay. Would you begin by introducing yourself and also your other presenter today? We have allocated 15 minutes for your presentation. Begin whenever you are ready.

1200

DONALD AND HELEN IRWIN

Mr D. Irwin: Thank you for your consideration. I am Don Irwin and this is my wife, Helen.

The financing of education in Ontario has risen enormously over the past few years. At the same time, municipal and provincial works have been starved for operational funds. We are now taxed more heavily than at any time in the history of the province, and too large a proportion of the total is going to education, especially considering how that money has been spent. As a representative taxpayer, I am asking for equitable taxation together with an improved system of education in Ontario, and in my opinion that is possible.

The purpose of education has been defined many times. However, one generally accepted definition may be summarized as, "To give children the knowledge and skills to cope with the world in which they will live as adults." Bearing that definition in mind, we shall consider finances.

Education is the most important task of the provincial government, yet educators and parents on every hand say the quality has declined as the cost has risen. Graduates are especially critical, and even popular magazines such as

Chatelaine and Reader's Digest have questioned the quality of education in recent issues.

In particular, the cost of full funding to Roman Catholic separate schools got out of hand. The original estimate—not of the entire duplicate system but only to implement the extension of full funding to the separate high schools—was said to be \$40 million annually over four years, \$160 million. Cost to date is not completely known, but more than one news report quotes more than \$1 billion—and rising—plus regular operating expenses.

If that were not enough, Roman Catholic boards now clamour for several shiny new schools plus furnishings and equipment, more millions, of which the major portion is expected to be covered by grants. There is no end in sight yet to the expansion of that system, for duplication. Ontario cannot afford two school systems without cutbacks in important items such as equipment or special programs. The children will suffer the most. Ontario cannot afford the runaway costs of the present time.

A choice must be made between the following: what would be nice to have—government-funded denominational/special interest education systems with all the best facilities and equipment—or what is proficient, equitable and affordable—one excellent publicly funded education system for all students.

I cannot give you a magic solution that will raise the additional billions and billions that the Ministry of Education seems to intend to pay out. My premise is that taxes must be reduced and that the Ministry of Education and other Ontario ministries must make all operations more cost-efficient to avoid the rising spectre of a total tax revolt.

The tax burden is too heavy now, yet news reports show many separate boards of education have a huge and rising deficit. Who will pay it?

Money is finite. The federal government plans to impose a sales tax to raise several new billions per year. Many items that are not taxed now will be levied. Those new billions will leave even less money from which taxpayers can fund the province.

We are already taxed to death. This year, 1989, Ontario residents lose on average 52 per cent of income to taxes. Yet the Ministry of Education has been expanding spending. I am concerned about the bitterness and the anger of the average person over rising taxes. Go anonymously, as I have, and talk to people in the supermarkets and public events in small towns and the topic seems to turn to taxes.

Of my 1989 property taxes, 68 per cent is for education, which leaves a meagre amount to pay for municipal maintenance and social services. Councils are reluctant to increase millage beyond what people can pay, so local services suffer. It is an intolerable situation.

Unemployment in the area is rising. Small plants close one after another, so the tax base is being eroded. At the same time, unemployment insurance cutbacks are likely to require an increase in local taxes to cover municipal requirements for welfare.

Essex county agriculture is in its second disaster year, first from drought and then from floods; two disasters that will take several years for recovery, that is, for the farms not already in bankruptcy or receivership. This is a relevant topic because it is crucial to raising funds for the schools. Every month a few more farms fold up, again breaking the tax base. Of course, the land may be sold, perhaps to a foreign speculator for whom the farmer may work as a peon, or he may drift into town to swell the ranks of the unemployed, either himself or the fellow whom he displaces in some job. And local rates rise again.

Taxes already take more than half of income. We need something to live on.

Increasing grants for education is not the answer to a fair funding of education. Grants are not gifts but payout of taxes raised at large.

The government has no money, only the ability to raise money through taxation. The public pays the grants.

Grants are ministry-ordered discrimination, since grants come from the province's general funds: taxes raised at large, that is, from people of all faiths and no faith. Thus, all of the people are taxed to support one select faith. Grants seem to cover about 40 per cent of public school costs and 60 per cent of separate school expenses, although one report quotes: "The provincial government support of public education will be only 34 per cent. Government support to separate schools was 67 per cent...."

Most spending increases for education have been unnecessary. A complete second system of education includes not only probably justifiable additional classrooms, teachers and new equipment, but also each duplicate board needs an expensive administrative body. Duplicate boards acquire and refurbish school buildings and offices. Usually a second batch of buses are obtained, to name only a few costs of duplication.

Deficits grow. The newspapers carry reports of expanding boards of education with deficits in the millions of dollars at the time the same boards announce plans for further costly expansion. Who will pay?

Why should all Ontario taxpayers be forced to fund grants for the religious activities of one faith? Either fund no denomination or special interest group, or fund them all. Anything else is not equitable treatment of the Ontario population.

Let the churches do their job. Any faith that cannot exist without government funding is not viable. The public educational system should not be weakened to prop up religious training for any faith, and I emphasize "any faith."

One faith has had its children attend Saturday morning classes for generations and it seems to have prospered. That is not necessarily the solution for every case, but it is one that could be supported financially by parents at a cost for even the slimmest of purses.

Both the public and separate systems have to cut programs when there is insufficient funding. It is the children in the public and separate schools who, in the long run, are shortchanged.

Math, for example, is math, and cannot differ according to the faith of the student. If the math does differ, that difference is not math, not education, but denominational training that should be the responsibility of the respective church and should take place there.

1210

To put education in a religion-oriented classroom and expect tax-supported funding, grants from money raised at large, demonstrates improper use of public moneys. The reason is plain. Duplicate systems cost a great deal more than a single system, especially when one is clamouring for several large, splendid new schools with state-of-the-art equipment, including such things as swimming pools. School buildings and equipment should be up-to-date and luxurious, provided that all students in the province enjoy the same level of benefits and if there are funds available to pay for the items without harming other government responsibilities, such as health, transportation, etc. But one set of facilities should not be better than the other.

However, teachers and students in the public schools have told me that much of their equipment and texts are worn out or obsolete. Many public schools are more than 50 years old. Capital works have been deferred for years. The ministry should be ashamed that it has turned its back on the public school needs in favour of

extending a dual system. Capital costs must be equitable and justifiable. To hand over millions to build schools necessary only because of duplication is neither.

Amalgamation of dual systems could provide better education at a more affordable level of cost. The Windsor Star of 22 August 1989 quotes a separate board administrator as saying that if some bus systems, separate and public, combined, substantial savings would occur. Of course. Even a cursory look at school annual financial statements show that the duplication of administrative personnel and offices and all services needed for a divided system increases costs greatly. These are costs that would reduce substantially if the duplicate systems were united. Eliminating the dual administrations would free up enough money to begin a program of educational improvement, smaller classes, updated texts and equipment, attractive classrooms and better educated teachers.

The bills are man-made creations. There is nothing sacred about them. Man made the bills, man can change them, just as hundreds of other government bills have been changed. There is nothing wrong with the government admitting to having made a mistake and correcting it. Institute new bills to provide one publicly funded education system, that is, kindergarten to grade 13, for all students in the province.

Any religious or special interest group that wants to provide education for its children that is different from the single universal public system should be allowed to do so, but at its own cost. Because the present system funding for education is inequitable, and yet, according to administrators, woefully inadequate, I ask that the government of Ontario abolish the funding of two systems of education and that an amalgamated education system open to all students, K-13, be instituted in order to use funds prudently and that savings be applied to bright, uncrowded classrooms, for excellent classroom equipment and for instructors with up-to-date qualifications.

A single publicly supported education system would provide an improved learning situation at a cost that Ontario taxpayers could better afford. One excellent education system would benefit all the students and given them the knowledge and skills to be competitive and successful in the modern world.

I appreciate the courtesy of your listening to this presentation. Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Irwin. We have a couple of minutes for members' questions, if any members have them.

Mr Reycraft: Thank you, Mr Irwin, for your presentation. I have two questions. Did you express your concern or did you have a concern about the cost of the separate school system in this province before the provincial government extended funding to Catholic secondary schools?

Mr D. Irwin: Yes, I did, absolutely.

Mr Reycraft: Are you aware of the constitutional decision that upheld the funding of Catholic secondary schools?

Mr D. Irwin: I am aware of the British North America Act. I am also aware that the BNA Act at one time did not recognize women as persons and did not recognize the native peoples of this country, and I do not hold with that today. Although they made a decision, I do not hold with the decision they made. I do not think they made a good one. It was not a prudent one from my point of view.

Mr Reycraft: The Supreme Court decision is based on more than just the BNA Act. It is also based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which did not exist in this province when the BNA Act was passed.

Mr D. Irwin: That is not how I understand the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is supposed to be equal for all, and we do not have equality here.

Mr Reycraft: I was simply indicating that the Constitution of the country in 1989 is not exactly the same as the one we had in 1867. Your suggestion is then that the guarantee made to Catholic education in this province as a part of the BNA Act is not one that should be supported now.

Mr D. Irwin: I support a system that is equal for all students, with which they are going to get a proper education so that they can fend with what is going on in this modern world. I feel that religion should be in its right place, that the church should not foist a failure—and I am not singling out any one, I am saying all of them—on its part to impart religion to children, adults, whomever, on the educational system.

Mr Reycraft: Thank you for your answers.

Mr Keyes: A technical question: back on page 2, I think this is the highest figure I have seen. You say that 68 per cent of your 1989 property tax is going to education. Do you mind just sharing with us what that would amount to, your 68 per cent? We have been asking people their amount of education tax and comparing it among cities and the rest. Would you have an idea of what your total tax bill is for the year? I realize

from what you have said here that you are on a fruit farm in the area.

Mr D. Irwin: I would say, just quickly off the top of my head right now, that the 68 per cent figure came from the municipality in the tax form it sent out to us. They had a pie on there, 68 per cent.

Mr Keyes: That is still higher, I think, than anything we have seen. That is why I am interested in it.

Mr D. Irwin: I would be paying \$2,500 in that respect, probably.

Mr Keyes: For the education tax, not the total tax.

Mr D. Irwin: That is right.

Miss Roberts: If I might follow that line of questioning, as a farmer, you were rebated 100 per cent of it except on your own property that you lived on and your home. Is that correct?

Mr D. Irwin: No, that is not correct. We have some rentals. They disqualify us on that basis. There are different rules and regulations that they have, and right now they have decided, or are deciding, to eliminate that entirely.

Miss Roberts: Because you earn so much more above and beyond the \$40,000.

Mr D. Irwin: You have to make, I think it is, \$8,000 to qualify as a farmer.

Miss Roberts: That is right. And you do not?

Mr D. Irwin: Yes, I do. I have about 100 acres, and there is no problem meeting that. But this rebate is not that significant, really, and they are talking about cutting it out entirely. If they do keep it on, there are different restrictions about whether you have other income, etc, so you do not really know where you stand. All indications are that it is not going to be significant. It is not going to help farmers that much.

Miss Roberts: But last year you received a farm tax rebate of some type to help you with your education tax.

Mr D. Irwin: No, last year we did not get it.

Mrs H. Irwin: Last year; but this year, the one that is 68 per cent that we are paying right now—

Mr D. Irwin: Yes, we may not get the one we are paying right now.

Miss Roberts: That is right, but last year you did, and all farmers have been helped with that along the way because of education tax.

Mr D. Irwin: That was argued originally, yes, and there was almost a tax revolt at the time because farmers felt put upon by the taxation system of that time. They reneged on their

original decision and allowed that rebate because they could see it was fairer and more equitable to the rural people.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr and Mrs Irwin, for coming to share your thoughts with our committee today. We very much appreciate that contribution.

Just before members leave, I would mention that the clerk has ascertained that we can have our

room until two o'clock, at which time would members please check out and pay any incidental charges. You can either bring your luggage down to this room or leave it in the housekeeping room, which is on the first floor beside the elevator.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 1220.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1404 in the Trianon Room, Holiday Inn, Windsor.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to reconvene the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, particularly related to the equity, adequacy and accountability of both operating and capital finances.

We are pleased to have as our first presentation this afternoon the Essex County Board of Education. Would you come forward, please? Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. If you would like to begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, then you can start your brief whenever you are ready after that.

ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Paré: The Essex County Board of Education is very pleased to have this opportunity to address the select committee. I would like to introduce the director of education on my right, Ron Pronger, and our superintendent of business on my left, Simon Vreman, both very capable individuals. That is why I brought them along with me today.

The Chairman: I forgot to mention, I think, that you have 30 minutes for your presentation time.

Mr Paré: Okay. Let me take my watch off. I will not cheat.

The Chairman: It is okay, I have mine off.

Mr Paré: I will try to be cognizant of that throughout. Have we a copy for everyone?

The Chairman: All members have a copy of the brief in front of them.

Mr Paré: Again, I thank you for this opportunity. The Essex County Board of Education is cognizant of the difficulties faced by the province in its attempts to provide adequate funding for all the various goods and services, including education, which are required and expected by the citizens of this province while at the same time attempting to keep taxation levels reasonable and palatable.

Within this framework of understanding, the Essex County Board of Education is pleased to have the opportunity to provide for the select committee of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario comments on educational financing

related to availability, equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances.

Recent changes in the general legislative grants formulae, as well as recently announced changes in the sharing of corporate assessments with coterminous Roman Catholic separate school boards, are causing great concern about the future funding of public schools. The extraordinarily high increases in education levies on the local property owners in 1989 should not be repeated in future years. Public education is a public good that deserves an appropriate share of provincial resources to fund its operations for the benefit of its elementary and secondary students.

I would also add an editorial comment here that we are very concerned about the continuing education students and the variety of community services provided in our building, which would also be jeopardized through inadequacy of funding.

Regarding provincial contributions to educational costs, during the past 15 years the provincial grants as a percentage of operating costs for school boards have declined steadily. We wonder how long this trend can continue. In 1975, the Essex County Board of Education received 61.2 per cent of its operating budget from the province. In 1989, it received only 39.3 per cent of its operating budget from the province. This represents a decline of 21.9 per cent, which has to be offset by local taxation increases. You can refer to appendix A to see the trend in that regard.

With regard to capital funding, for new pupil places recent increases in the ministry's capital grants have not kept pace with needs. Much of the increased needs flow from the ministry initiatives, such as reduction of class size to 20 to 1 at grade 1 and grade 2 levels and proposed initiatives relative to the establishment of junior kindergarten and all-day kindergarten programs.

For some years now, all of the available grants have been required for new pupil places due to the growth in enrolments, and no grants were available for other purposes such as renovation and replacement of ageing facilities. As ministry records will show, most of the capital grants are used to build new schools in high-growth areas in the greater Toronto area.

Essex county is growing as well, but much of the demand for new pupil places results from program expansion in junior kindergarten and French immersion, special education programs

required under Bill 82, and reduction in class sizes in grades 1 and 2. The Essex County Board of Education has requested funding for additions to six elementary schools over the next two years at an estimated total cost of \$4.8 million. This is referenced in our appendix B.

I would add that the Essex County Board of Education, I believe, is managing its funds in the most fiscally responsible manner by requesting additions to the existing facilities. My question at this point is should we compete for new pupil places by submitting plans for new schools instead?

None of these projects has been approved for grant support. As a result, the board has added over 24 portable classrooms to elementary schools over the past two years, bringing the total to 49 under the Essex County Board of Education. For this, I refer you to appendix C. We added two more last week, so we can make that total 51; we are not sure where it is going to end, but we would like to accommodate them as best we can.

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There is a growing reluctance on the part of the municipal councillors and parents to accept such temporary accommodations while paying higher levies for educational costs. I am sure you are finding that throughout the province. There are additional problems in upkeep, caretaking and demands on gymnasiums and washrooms. There are also the fire hazards involved when we speak about these portable classrooms. This all has to be under consideration.

Renovations and replacements of ageing facilities: Existing facilities are ageing and require an increasing amount for maintenance and renovations. Most of our schools are over 35 years old, some dating back to the early 1900s and 1920s. Consequently, much of the building's equipment is outdated and inefficient. Heating plants, roofs and windows are due for replacement and/or upgrading.

Because of the increased budgetary restraints, only the most necessary work gets done, usually roof repairs and replacements. A much greater emphasis should be placed on the funding of renovation and replacement projects, in order to protect our investment in the existing schools. Again, I would refer you to appendix D which will give the school's name and the year the school was built.

Health and safety requirements: The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires school boards to provide facilities which are designed to make schools safer places in which to work and

learn. In shops and laboratories, we must provide vented fume hoods, eyewash stations and shower facilities, which are presently lacking in all of our secondary schools. A preliminary estimate puts the cost of providing such facilities at \$750,000.

In addition, we face higher than usual costs in renovating facilities due to the requirements of the Ontario fire marshal. Converting a once empty elementary school to day use for alternative education programs requires a considerable amount of money to meet the Ontario fire marshal requirements. As noted earlier, while all the available capital grants are used to build new pupil places in the high-growth areas of the province, little or no capital grant support is available for other necessary improvements in existing facilities.

In regard to the capital grant plan, in general terms, we wish to reiterate our statement in an earlier brief to this committee.

"Whatever goals for Ontario's education system are adopted, one important adjunct should be the provision of adequate resources to accomplish the goals agreed upon.

"In particular, the capital grant plan should be amended to reflect current realities in class loading used to calculate the number of classrooms needed to accommodate students in various programs. For example, the Ministry of Education uses 90 per cent of 35 or 31.5 students per regular classroom in calculating capital grant support, while at the same time encouraging school boards to decrease class size for grades 1 and 2 to a maximum of 20 pupils per classroom. Clearly, the capital grant support is not in concert with the stated goal of reducing the pupil-teacher ratio for grades 1 and 2.

"In general terms, any program initiative should carry with it a commitment by the provincial government to fund such programs in an equitable manner."

Operating expenditure grants: The education funding model introduced in 1989 resulted in the highest mill rate increases in recent history. I refer you to appendix E in this regard. By mandating a much higher local share of approved costs, the ministry transferred a greater portion of the total education costs to the local ratepayer, a regressive taxation technique. At the same time, the ministry reduced local control and spending initiatives by changing the grant mix so that 58 per cent is in the form of a basic per pupil block grant and 42 per cent is provincially determined, as referred to in appendix F, which shows the bar graph.

The Essex County Board of Education believes that any cost increases resulting from the province's initiatives should be funded from provincial revenue sources, not by the local property ratepayers. The much cited need for more accountability should also apply to the provincial decision-makers. When mandating more services or when regulating more stringent health and safety requirements the necessary resources should be provided as well. The 1989 education funding model is not a responsible way of financing education.

The health levy: The special health levy, which will now replace the current OHIP premiums in 1990, is an example of a provincially mandated change which impacts on school board expenditures. For our board, it is estimated it will cost an additional \$480,000 in 1990. It seems to us that the increased revenue to the provincial Treasurer means that expenditures previously borne by the province are now transferred to the employers, including school boards. We would urge the select committee to recommend that compensating grants be made available to school boards so that provincial health costs are not transferred to the local property taxpayers.

Pooling of commercial and industrial assessments: Local sharing of public corporation taxes will be implemented as of 1 January 1990. The sharing will be on the basis of the percentage distribution of public and separate residential ratepayers. We have two concerns in this regard.

1. The larger tax base for public school support was warranted as public schools offer a full range of programs and services to all students whatever their religion, ethnic origin or ability level. This is our mandate and our pride. The public school system should have first call on public funds. If it is the objective of the government to install two equal and parallel school systems, one public and one separate, this must be made clear to the entire tax base in the province.

2. There are continuing arguments and indeed pressures to further adjust the sharing formula on the basis of the number of students rather than ratepayers. We urge the select committee to resist any further erosion of the public school system's tax base.

If I may summarize our recommendations: First, increase the provincial contribution to the cost of elementary and secondary education so as to restore the provincial support level to 60 per cent of the cost of education; second, provide adequate capital funding for permanent school facilities, rather than add more portable class-

rooms; third, give funds for renovation and replacement projects; fourth, give operating expenditure grants for employee health levy costs and occupational health and safety costs; and fifth, restrict regional pooling of commercial and industrial assessments so as not to further erode the support base of public education.

I would submit that they are roughly in prioritized order. That is our presentation.

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The Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Paré, for your presentation today. We have approximately 12 or 13 minutes for questions from the members.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the report. The figures are very useful to us. In fact, I think your appendix A really points up what has happened in the province. You seem to have the almost archetypical board average, if you want to look at it in those terms. The province is now paying 39.3 per cent of your funding rather than 61 per cent, the magic level that was finally achieved in 1975.

If you look at that in other terms, the increase from the province has been about 100 per cent over those 14 years, whereas the increase you have had to pick up from the property tax base has been 200 per cent. I think that really encapsulates the difficulty the system is in at the moment.

One of the presumptions we have heard is that when the province makes its decisions about what the local property taxpayer can bear, it does this complicated analysis of the relative wealth of the local community. I wonder if you could respond. In relative terms, has your community's wealth risen by 100 per cent higher than the average wealth across the province in order that you should get this incredible increase in burden? What could be the possible rationale for the local taxpayer here in Essex bearing the brunt of this cost, compared with the average taxpayer and the wealth of the province, which has increased quite dramatically, of course, since 1975? I wonder if you have anything to tell us about the history of Essex in that period of time in terms of its growth.

Mr Paré: I would like to brag about the wealth of Essex county. I am not sure that I can adequately. Why do I not pass this on to our superintendent of business, Mr Vreman?

Mr Vreman: The growth of assessment certainly has not matched the increase in educational cost. It is very difficult really to relate the ability to pay in Essex county with the

rest of the province. We had approximately 10 per cent above the average in terms of equalized assessment per pupil, but as you all know, that reflects two realities: the first is that we have a declining number of students in total compared to 50 years ago because of the extension of funding—that erodes our secondary school enrolments—and the second is that the assessment equalization factor, with which we determine what equalized assessment per pupil is, is not under our control. That is of course set at the provincial level.

In absolute terms, you cannot really answer the question whether the ability relates directly to the raw assessment. I have no idea, because we have a platter of assessments in the 22 municipalities that support us, but for each, of course, a different equalization factor tries to equalize that. I know that our equalized assessment certainly has doubled in 15 years. As Mr Johnston indicated, that has only resulted in the doubling of grants, but our costs really tripled in the meantime, so the absolute burden on the ratepayer has certainly increased over that period of time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was a mildly rhetorical question, but I am also presuming that in fact your growth in wealth has not approximated that of Metropolitan Toronto or other major parts of the province and that therefore the province, in really hard terms, is putting less money into an area that needs more money.

I guess if there is a frustration I am having with the hearings at the moment, it is that I think that indicates a very major structural problem with our funding at the moment. Even in your response, when you summarize your concerns, you are not proposing an enormous change to the present system, as I see it. I wonder about that because I am not sure how, in any equalization system that you might develop across the province, the diversity of assessments and expectations, etc, across the province can actually be met on that property tax base that we seem to want to base our system on.

Other provinces have moved away from this and some of our commissions have recommended our moving away from it, and yet I am not hearing from you, for instance, that there should be a major move to, say, one of the things Macdonald suggested, an income tax base at the local level and a number of other kinds of alternatives that have been proposed. I wonder if I could have some comments on that.

Mr Pronger: I think our brief is, hopefully, pragmatic and reasonable. We are not looking to

reduce local autonomy. Some of the suggestions you have made I think would suggest that we might lose some local autonomy, particularly for the trustees.

Our concern is that at least some equalization occur. The ministry and the government of this province have said for many years that equality of educational opportunity is the backbone of what should occur. We believe the figures we have cited show that has not happened because we cannot compete. A rural board such as ours cannot compete because we do not have the large industrial-commercial base that many of the urban centres have. As you well know, Metropolitan Toronto boards in fact get no grants. They probably owe the provincial government money because of the amount of industrial assessment they have.

It is fair to say that students in areas like Metro and many of the other urban areas of this province have very specialized schools for the arts and so on that we cannot provide because we do not have the dollars and cents to do so. I mean cents in the monetary sense, not in the other; please do not misunderstand what I am saying. If you truly believe in equality of education for students in this province, then you have to change your funding mechanism. Even having coterminous boards share the industrial-commercial levy is not appropriate because of what we are sharing. We are sharing a poor base. We are not sharing the large industrial base of the Metro area or even of the city of Windsor.

If you truly believe in equality, which I think you do, then you need to look at how you fund other boards of the size of enrolment of 17,000 or 18,000 students in more rural areas, so that we can provide our students with the same opportunities that the Metro boards and large urban boards are able to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wonder if I can take you up on that before we move on to somebody else. I do not disagree with you at all, except I do have difficulties with the notions of autonomy that come forward from the local boards these days. I think we have a very confused notion of what real autonomy is, especially if we want to have that autonomy tied to accountability for local funds, etc.

We have the same expectation in terms of autonomy for the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, which is paying 100 per cent of its costs, as we have for a small northern board that may be paying two or three per cent of its costs with the province picking up the rest. In your case, you

are somewhere in between, with 40 per cent of the cost being assumed.

In terms of your real autonomy in affecting curriculum and other kinds of things, I wonder if that needs to be tied to the supposed assessment base in terms of the notion of paying the piper, or whether it should not be put in some stricter constitutional terms about what the local board is responsible for and what the province is responsible for, and then have the lines of accountability based on that rather than on the financial base, as it is at the moment. I think we had that suggestion made to us in Ottawa.

Mr Pronger: I guess I would say that what you have suggested seems relatively appropriate in terms of what we have been saying.

Mr Reyecraft: I have two questions. Your 51 portables, 26 of them, I guess, in the last two years, would suggest that there is a significant amount of growth in the population in Essex county. One of the things the province has on the drawing board now is a bill that will allow school boards to use lot levies to fund new school construction. There are concerns in many parts of the province about that as a viable alternative.

Lot levies in London, for example, right now are about \$2,000. Lot levies in Vaughan are \$14,600. There is a reason for that difference. Growth costs money, no matter where it occurs, and one of the reasons the lot levies in London are not nearly as high is because the market simply would not support it.

I am interested in knowing the board's position with respect to the use of lot levies for new school construction and whether or not you support the legislation, given the fact that it is permissive and not mandatory, and whether or not you think you will be able to make use of it.

1430

Mr Vreman: I could comment on that. The lot levy question bothers us for two reasons. One is that the converse of that is the province is reducing its share of the capital costs from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. We do not believe this is the way to go with lot levies. The other part is a practical one. We have only two growth pockets within the county, the Tecumseh-St Clair Beach area and Sandwich West, as you probably know. The rest of the county would not be affected. If you single out two relatively small municipalities, that would be discriminatory to my way of thinking, and sharing or pooling those funds for building elementary schools, for example, does not seem to us to be reasonable.

Chances are better than even, for example, that a separate elementary school would be built

with those funds rather than any public school. We have had no success so far in the last several years in getting the government to fund any of our elementary school additions or new schools. Why would it be different with a pool of money from new residences, for example? I fail to see that.

I believe the province should provide a higher proportion of the capital funding, not reduce it. I have heard the argument of leveraging more capital spending. Now, that is a nonsensical argument to my mind, because then you should reduce it to 40 per cent or 20 per cent. You will lever even more, several billion dollars worth of construction, assuming that it is even possible in practical terms. But no, as far as I am concerned, as a financial man, I do not think it is a very good idea. I would certainly not recommend to the board that we opt for a lot levy to fund construction of elementary or secondary schools in Essex county.

Mr Reyecraft: One of the things that the reduction in the provincial share of new capital projects does do, though, is allow the ministry to approve a larger number of projects with the finite number of dollars the Treasurer makes available in any given year. It is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$300 million for this year and each of the next two years.

If the provincial share were to remain the same, we would assume that the number of projects approved would be lower, if you had the finite amount of capital money on an annual basis. In saying you do not support the concept of using lot levies to fund new school construction, would you prefer that which has been proposed or would you prefer to reduce the number of new schools that are approved each year?

Mr Vreman: I think we would prefer a more positive approach by the government: Increase the contribution. In other words, the tax base at the provincial level is much, much higher and much more fairly distributed than is the local property tax base. I do not think it is appropriate, really, to transfer the responsibility for school construction to an isolated group of residential property owners.

Mr Reyecraft: But even if the annual allocation was \$500 million or \$1 billion, the number of schools that could be approved with that amount of money is going to depend on the share of provincial support. If we reduce the level of support for each project, we can approve a larger number of schools.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The \$1 billion would help.

Mr Reycraft: That would be about 20 per cent of what we really need, of what has been requested anyway, for the next five years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would still be \$700,000 more a year.

Mr Mahoney: You mean \$700 million.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Sorry; \$700 million.

Mr Reycraft: My other question deals with the chart at appendix E. I found the chart interesting. I note that the increase in the mill rate and the increase in grant support were pretty close to the same in terms of percentages for elementary, but dramatically different for secondary. I am curious about the explanation for that.

Mr Vreman: This is provided by the ministry staff people, incidentally. In explaining why the mill rate changes occurred, what appendix E shows is the equalized mill rate mandated by the ministry. This must be raised on equalized assessment of the board.

Mr Reycraft: Why is the increase in the secondary mill rate so much higher vis-à-vis the provincial grant increase than it is at the elementary level?

Mr Vreman: I think they ran out of money. The easy answer is Bill 30, obviously. It is far more expensive to fund two parallel secondary systems than having one as we had in the past. But I would be guessing here. These are set by the province, not by school boards. We have asked the same question of ministry officials and we have never received an adequate answer to that. We are only urging the committee to prevent this from happening again next year. How can we tack another 10 per cent or 15 per cent on to the local tax burden? That would be ludicrous.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The ministry staff have already taken note and are going to get us a response. They will send it on to you, Doug.

Mr Reycraft: Thank you, Mr Johnston.

Mr Pronger: If I could clarify with respect to Mr Reycraft's question about portable classrooms in our jurisdiction, all of those were not put there because of increases in enrolment. There were also program requirements, as we have outlined. That raises an issue. Of course, many of those program requirements have come out as a result of ministry initiatives. The ministry is famous for beginning programs, such as reduction in grades 1 and 2 down to 20-1. They fund it for three years, and at the end of those three years there will no longer be any funding,

but we all know that those initiatives will not end at the end of those three years.

We will be faced with the prospect of having to continue those 20-1 pupil-teacher ratios into the future because of the tremendous reaction of the public and the federations if we were to drop back to the PTR levels prior to those initiatives. That is part of the reason we have been putting so many portable classes in, to meet ministry initiatives, but without adequate funding or at least a long-range prospect of adequate funding to carry them on.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Pronger. Mrs O'Neill, although we have run out of time technically, I think we have time for one more question.

Mrs O'Neill: I wonder if the ministry officials, Mr Brumer in particular, would have the answer regarding equalized differences in elementary and secondary at the present time, or do you want to wait until later. I know there is a much more technical answer and it certainly has something to do with bringing together the level of grants for elementary and secondary and condensing those, but there are other reasons as well. Are you ready, Mr Brumer, or do you want to wait until later?

Mr Brumer: I will wait and get you a proper response.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay; thank you. If I may then go to my own questions, I am very happy, gentlemen, that you brought before us the health and safety requirements and the cost associated with those. I think you are the first people who have been very clear about that. I think it is something that should be brought to our minds, and also, that the capital grant plan being focused on by many boards is somewhat outdated.

I would like to go to your appendix on your capital forecast. I am interested to see the use of reserves here. I have not seen one that has quite as many references to reserves. I am just wondering what kind of reserves you have, and have you guidelines regarding reserves? Is this the only purpose they are used for?

Mr Vreman: There are actually two kinds of reserves. One is the reserve for working funds. That is more or less a mill rate equalization fund. That is by far the most significant amount we have. That equals roughly 3.5 per cent of our budget. The capital reserves we have access to are only \$140,000, so they would not fund very much. What we are trying to do at the moment is to increase them somewhat by selling some

properties we acquired years ago but never used. We still have some sites.

Mrs O'Neill: So these are your ministry equity reserves that are held. Is that what these are?

Mr Vreman: The smallest part, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: You said you had 22 municipalities that are involved. Are they studying a reassessment of market value in those 22 municipalities?

Mr Vreman: Yes. The reassessments started about a dozen years ago and involved only four of the 22 municipalities, unfortunately. They have now started the reassessment program again, but fewer than half have been done so far. We still have an antiquated assessment base.

Mrs O'Neill: A final small one: Could you give us your PTR ratio in elementary and secondary schools? Would you have those figures?

Mr Pronger: The PTR in the secondary panel in the regular classes is 16.9 to 1, and in the modified basic programs is 11.9 to 1; that is in our special vocational schools such as Western Secondary School that you are all familiar with. In the community living it is 8 to 1. At the elementary panel it is 19.8 to 1. Of course, there are many exclusions from the PTR, such as principals and vice-principals, so if you are looking at system PTRs, they are much different. I am sorry I cannot tell you what the current one is. We have not been able to calculate that today.

1440

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just as supplementary to that: Since the grades 1 and 2 money was made available, did you have to access that to get to 20 to 1 in grades 1 and 2, and did that have any effect on the other parts of the primary or intermediate junior levels?

Mr Pronger: We have had to add considerable staffing to reach that level. We tried not to affect the junior and intermediate division too much, although it has had some effect of a minor increase in class sizes; but we primarily tried not to affect that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Some other boards have just said they were not able to avoid it, unfortunately. I was just trying to be consistent. Thank you.

The Chairman: I would very much like to thank the Essex County Board of Education on behalf of the committee for its contribution to our proceedings today. Thank you.

Mr Paré: Thank you for your time.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Friends of Public Education in Ontario; if you could come forward, please. Good afternoon, Mrs Woodbridge. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time. Perhaps you would begin by introducing yourselves officially for the purposes of Hansard. I notice that you have an extremely extensive brief here. You might want to précis this, because I do not think that there will be any way you can get through it and have time for members' questions. But it is your choice how you wish to deal with your 30 minutes. Please begin whenever you are ready.

FRIENDS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

Mr Meuser: We really want to thank you for giving the opportunity of coming before the committee. I am the current chairman of the Friends of Public Education, and we should tell you basically who we are and why we are.

The Chairman: Perhaps you could just start by introducing yourselves officially so that Hansard can pick up your comments.

Mr Meuser: You know Edith Woodbridge. I am George Meuser, and this is Reg Cozens.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr Meuser: The Friends of Public Education started on 29 May 1985, when eight directors and several hundred members saw the need for citizens to come to the defence of our public school system. This all happened, of course, when full funding was extended to the separate school system in the province. We felt this posed a bit of a restriction, a serious weakening of the choices of public boards of education, and I am really pleased to have followed our Essex County Board of Education in its presentation.

Who are we? What sorts of people make up the Friends of Public Education?

I recall years ago my young son—we live in a border community—asking, "Dad, how can you be pro-Canadian without being anti-American?" You should know that we have been trying since our inception to be pro public school system rather than anti separate school system. We happen in our membership to have people from the humanities, evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Jews. We have the full spectrum of people in our supporting group of Friends of Public Education.

I think that with that sort of background, Mrs Woodbridge can follow along with what we believe.

Mrs Woodbridge: I wanted George to introduce the group because he is the chairman. George and I, two years ago, were at Tiananmen Square, where democracy was fought for. We are both members of missionary families in China. We are members of international families. Today I am coming to you as a Canadian, not just as an Ontarian, and we are going to speak about what it means to be a Canadian citizen and not just to divide the spoils in Ontario.

Today I am just going to hop, skip and jump through this, because I feel we had to make the statement. You can read it as a written brief, but I will speak to it.

We feel there is no educational equity for Ontario citizens, the maintenance of two systems of education is not fiscally responsible and the resulting systems are inadequate to meet the public mandate for educational excellence.

It has been said that we teach by what we do. Therefore, how we fund has a message for young people, and I do not think they are buying our reasons. I have sat through many public meetings. Every one that has been held in Amherstburg I have sat through and listened to young people speak, and that will come into my presentation.

The educational financing and structure are something that we protested with the standing committee on social development in 1985, and we still have the same concerns. What are we as Canadians teaching to the coming generations? We are concerned that educational rights are attached to the land, not to the people, and that if we move to another province we could not take our educational rights with us. This is unacceptable in the post-Second World War United Nations charter of human rights. I lived through the Second World War and I waited to see what the new world would be, and when the UN came out with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights I was thrilled. Canadians seem to be trying to find all the way they can for groups to intervene between the person and those individual human rights.

A Canadian approach to equity and adequacy of education was introduced by the Prime Minister on 25 August and roundly denounced as being political, but he said: "I want to see action, on behalf of all young Canadians, who ask only for equal opportunities.... Our educational system is shortchanging many Canadians and imposing a severe burden on our national competitiveness. We all know that in an information age, Canada simply cannot afford such results."

The patchwork of religious privilege which exists across Canada is unacceptable. It reminds me of all the different railroad tracks that used to not meet and the different fire engine gauges in the Battle of Britain. They could not take a fire engine from one place to the other and plug them in, and that was what made some of the fires so disastrous. We are doing the same thing with education. For the sake of young Canadians, we are emphasizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A presentation was made to you in Ottawa by John Hilborn. He said this committee is not interested in principles, and I was sorry to hear that because I thought the Second World War was fought for principles and I hear the young people speaking for principles. Surely to goodness, the educational authorities in this province should speak for principles.

I have introduced a little story in here. People say: "You can't question Bill 30. It's a fact, it's here to stay, it's cast in stone." This story was told in our church two weeks ago, and I said, "This is exactly the story I want to tell the select committee on education."

A fisherman was very successful. A stranger asked to go with him to find out the reason for his success, so they got off into a remote part of the lake and the fisherman took out a stick of dynamite, lit it and threw it into the water, and when the fish surfaced he scooped them in. The stranger said: "Well, I'm the game warden. You can't do that." The fisherman did not answer. He just reached down, picked up another stick of dynamite, lighted it and said, "Well, are you going to fish or are you just going to sit there?"

I am asking this committee: Are you going to restore equity, adequacy and accountability to each individual citizen of Ontario or are you going to keep putting group privileges between citizens and their universal, inalienable human rights?

The meaning of equity? I had to look it up. You take for granted you understand the meaning of these words. It does not mean equal. It has a universal connotation. The word "public," the word "universal," the word "catholic" and the word "equity" all the mean the same thing. They mean every man. They do not mean a wall up the middle. I would like to leave that part with you.

1450

The importance of equity: This committee placed equity first on the list. With respect to equity of funding, do you merely intend to place the public and separate in two categories and say, "These should have equity between the two

groups," or do you have a broader view of equity?

If equity means recourse to principles of justice to correct or supplement law, is the law, the legality of this Bill 30, failing to provide equity to some groups, other religious groups, in society; failing individual equity, or both?

It is unthinkable that in educational circles today we might define "equity" in a narrow, parochial sense or as having anything to do with parochialism. The young people of Amherstburg, the student leaders in the public portion, were Roman Catholic students, and they spoke out about the Gestapo methods used to fill the seats in St Thomas of Villanova Secondary School. They said, "Where is democracy and freedom?"

They were hurting. Maybe they spoke too emotionally. The Amherstburg group is not here today because they have fears. There cannot be fears unless there are threats. Maybe when these students and their parents are free from the obligation to the educational system, they will come forward with the documented pressures that have been placed on students in Essex county.

Bill 30 is an optional thing. It is permissive legislation. In other words, the separate system may offer it, but once it offers it, there is pressure brought to bear on Roman Catholics not to attend public schools. I have written every party in this province to talk about this. So far, the people who have documented it have not come forward, but if they do, we may have a Newfoundland case, which you people have been warned about. There seems to be a religious system which is on a pedestal and cannot be touched, and this is not going over well in Canada today.

The second thing was the commercial and industrial assessment which has been equally divided. The sophistry used to sell the justice of this move denigrates the concept of equity and violates our first freedom, the freedom of religion. "No person should be coerced by law to support any religion, not even his own." This is a statement from the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, of which I am a member.

Equity does not and cannot exist for Ontario citizens in the matter of educational financing if present policies continue.

One system, granted an élite status in Ontario, has a mission described in theological language and exists for the indoctrination of the adherents of one Christian denomination. In other provinces, for instance in Quebec, there are two

confessional systems. In Newfoundland, if you are not a Christian, you cannot be a trustee and you may not be hired as a teacher. Therefore, people are joining churches for jobs. George and I would describe them as rice Christians. It is prostituting religion.

Is this what we want? We know of cases in Essex county where teachers cannot get a job with the public system and are joining the Catholic church, insincerely, to get a job.

We want to talk about the mission of the public system. The Minister of Education referred in his opening speech in 1985 to the two missions. He never did say what ours was, but it seems that the courts are willing to provide a mission for us. It is to promote and exemplify the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we will be penalized if we do not.

It does describe our philosophy. We are open to all equally, and we are proud of it, but it is placed upon us and is enforceable by law, and the other system is exempt. It has also brought changes in the teaching of religious classes in certain areas of the province, areas which are predominantly Protestant and cherish those rights.

We have had letters to us from the evangelicals. We also have humanist members who prefer that there is no religion.

Public education, as of 23 September 1988, believes there can be no religious indoctrination of students, and no faith is to have a position of primacy. It seems strange that the government is insisting upon for the whole of the province, that no religion should have a position of primacy. We are not permitted a state religion.

A group in Thunder Bay does not think this is fair, and Protestant separate schools are the very next section in the Education Act, section 137. They are still there and permissible but not on an equal basis with Catholic separate schools; if the public system is secular, surely to goodness Protestant separate schools are just as important as Catholic separate schools.

Recently, Lincoln county has the foot in the door for a Mennonite school and there have been suggestions in Essex county for a similar public endorsement and sponsoring of a religious Protestant school. Nothing has come of that.

In the September 1988 court ruling, the minister also mentioned that we must be an example of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He said these values are considered societal values which "Canadians hold and regard as

essential to the wellbeing of our society." If so, why is one system exempt?

A great deal was said about the undemocratic process of Bill 30 and I have quoted an article from the Amherstburg Echo on page 11 referring to dual funding as an election issue, no matter what the parties contrive to do to make it not an issue, and he mentions the cost estimates as \$60 million or \$600 million and we all know it has gone well past that.

This was echoed by Brian Fox of the Queen's Park bureau of the Windsor Star. He talks about the "issueless election" which all parties contrived to avoid.

Whenever the government of a country fails to adequately represent the rights of individuals, then individuals must organize, whether it is South Africa, Ireland or wherever, and that is what we did.

Recently, through a speech in the Legislature by Bob Chiarelli, the member for Ottawa West, we discovered that the federal government had the power to disallow Bill 30 but did not do so. He quoted Senator Eugene Forsey and R. MacGregor Dawson, who favoured the disallowance of "provincial acts which affect fundamental rights of Canadian citizens. These rights should be the same in all provinces of Canada and should be unassailable by provincial statutes." Think about that one.

Equity as related to the political stance of the separate system: I have done quite a bit of reading. We have been very ecumenically minded in Essex county. Right back to 1850, I have evidence of ecumenical feelings, and in the last 20 years we have taken part in things where the churches have got together. But when a church becomes a state, then it is political, and that is where we object to a state within our state, a distinct society, and we find that we are opposing this as freedom fighters. This is not as anti Catholic, but any church which would become a state and a political entity. We have an ambassador from our country to the Vatican.

I make the point that equity or supremacy, when you follow the thinking and the philosophy of both these streams through to the top, each one claims supremacy. The charter claims to be supreme. The Vatican claims, among its own adherents, to be the supreme authority. Which one will the government place as supreme?

I quote from an article in the March-April 1988 issue of Documentary: "Where Sean Conway, the former minister, emphasized that protecting the viability of the public school system was the first principle of Bill 30, the current minister and

the arbitrator he appointed clearly felt that protecting the distinctive mission of the separate schools overrides the first principle."

What does "first" mean? This is a separate quote. It is not in here.

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We have de facto superiority. Given the fact, once again, that the Minister of Education is a Roman Catholic with supreme loyalty to the Vatican, can he objectively handle the supreme goals of the public system? I hope so. Perhaps the public system deserves its own ministry and minister to represent its interests.

The dualism that exists is something that is going to tear us apart. People do not want an Ireland. We have been in touch with southern Ireland and the schools there used to have a period of religion where non-Catholics could exempt themselves. Today they have removed those classes and made religion pervasive so people cannot step out of the classroom. Is this what we have to look forward to in Canada?

Andrew Coyne of Saturday Night says: "Canada is tearing itself apart in competition for the favours of the state. The combination of interfering state and domineering élites is deadening to any sense of the nation's affairs."

I will skip over the next two. I think accountability is definitely related to equity and we have political, legal and fiscal accountability as well as social accountability. I believe that none of the fantastic increase in dollars has increased the educational excellence that has been wasted in duplication. In Essex county the unity of our communities is something that is not sellable.

If you want to go to my summaries—am I running out of time?

The Chairman: You have approximately eight minutes left.

Mrs Woodbridge: Okay, I will go to the third.

Adequacy: Today the public requires the fullest and most up-to-date educational system possible. Vista magazine, which is put out by Magna International Inc, one of the big cartels, said this has "more to do with organization, attitudes and commitment" than it has to do with dollars. So maybe this is where we have to look at our organization of education rather than the dollars we are spending.

From our perspective as individuals in society, we feel that whatever has been provided is now becoming more and more inadequate. In the past four years so much has been poured into the

secondary system that the elementary system has been held back.

The government's promotion of mainstreaming seemed to be an attempt to avoid technical school duplication. This was successfully challenged in the Essex county area on the basis of the inadequacy of the other available programs. The minister, Chris Ward, eventually wrote a letter to the principal reinforcing the program of that school both now and in the future. However, is the government obliged to duplicate Western Secondary School for the Catholic student in response to a 1986 human rights decision in Ontario saying that they cannot discriminate in education while they can discriminate in religion?

The public is acutely aware of the unnecessary and glitzy competition. Swimming pools, carpets, air-conditioning and that sort of thing did not go down very well in Amherstburg. Both Gord Henderson, on page 25, and the editorial staff of the Amherstburg Echo blasted what has been going on. Mayor Millson in Windsor did not want to see taxes go up because he wants to compete in the economic building of the city of Windsor.

On page 27 are the conclusions: Equity does not exist in Ontario education. The government has not proven accountable to the total needs of the public realm, and the taxation of the public realm for the support of a religious institution is not accountable to a fundamental aspect of a free society—freedom of religion. The province cannot adequately fund two parallel systems of education, either in operating or capital financing, and further encroachment on local financing will increase the variances in educational programs from region to region.

We would like to recommend that the select committee address the inequities which a religious élite imposes on society and that the governments of all the provinces look at the patchwork of privilege.

The Chairman: Do any members have questions? We have a couple of minutes left. Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Our next presenter today is the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Could you come forward, please. Good afternoon, gentlemen, and welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have you with us today. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation and we hope there will be a few minutes left at the end for members' questions. Begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and give

your full names, then you can begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

WINDSOR ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Janisse: I am A. Janisse, chairman of the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Mr Benzinger, at my left, is the vice-chairman of the board and Mr Marchini is our business administrator.

We are pleased to be present in order to express our board's opinions and offer several recommendations relating to the financing of education. On behalf of our board, please accept our congratulations for undertaking and conducting these hearings throughout the province.

The Windsor separate school board is composed of 15 trustees: 12 English-language trustees elected on a ward basis and three French-language trustees elected on a city-wide basis. Our system is responsible for the education of 17,762 students from junior kindergarten to OAC. The English-language elementary enrolment is 10,950. The French-language elementary section has an enrolment of 1,517. The high school student population is 5,276. The various needs of these students will be addressed by an estimated 1989 budget in excess of \$86.5 million.

Our brief will be presented under three headings: accountability, adequacy and equity.

From a financial point of view, local school boards are responsible to two main groups, the local ratepayers and the government of Ontario through the Ministry of Education.

It is fair to say that Canadians have reached the saturation point when it comes to taxation. Recent statistics show that the average Canadian works for more than half the year just to pay the taxes that he or she owes to various levels of government. Since these various taxes represent the largest single expenditure of most people, they have the right to demand that their tax dollars are spent with the same amount of frugality with which they make the rest of their expenditures. In theory, this aspect of accountability is assured through the democratic process.

The British North America Act granted provinces the exclusive right to make laws regarding education. It would thus seem incumbent upon the provinces to also provide a level of funding that is adequate to carry out their directives. Since the expending of these funds is entrusted to local boards, the ministry has unchallenged right to demand an accounting as to the efficiency and effectiveness with which these

funds are expended. Our board recognizes and supports this right.

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In spite of these constitutional provisions granting exclusivity to the provinces, education in Ontario has developed into a *de facto* partnership in which local boards and the Ministry of Education are, or should be, equal partners. In an equal partnership, both parties should be aware of what the other party is planning and the lines of communication should be open and flowing. It seems that time after time this basic tenet of successful partnership is ignored or forgotten and one or both parties are continually reacting to new incentives, initiatives or changed rules. Certainly, the committee will appreciate that when one is constantly reacting in this manner things just do not get done as efficiently or effectively as possible.

Prime contributors to this reactionary state are the timing of the release of general legislative grants and the differences in year-ends of the ministry, local boards and schools themselves. To illustrate, local boards have a fiscal year coincident with the calendar year, so naturally they would start planning a budget for the coming year in October or November.

However, the general legislative grant regulations are not released by the ministry until late March of the budget year. This apparently is due to the fact that the ministry operates in a fiscal period that ends 31 March. By the time the grant regulations are received by local boards, they have already expended approximately 30 per cent of their budget. If there are significant changes to the regulations, as there were, for instance, in 1989 with the 10 per cent and 20 per cent increase in the equalized mill rates, it is virtually impossible to implement significant reductions in expenditures at this late date.

The only alternative at this point, aside from budgeting for a deficit, is to increase taxes by an exorbitant amount, which certainly impedes the local boards' ability to be accountable to the local taxpayer. To compound the difficulty, school principals must operate on a split-year basis, never knowing if they are going to have sufficient funds to start a school year.

Recommendation: That the fiscal year-end of the ministry and the local boards be changed to be coincidental; that consideration be given to having the year-end coincide with the school year-end; and that general legislative grant regulations be released well in advance of the budget year.

The Minister of Education has shown an increased interest in program incentive funding in the past two years. History has shown that there is an alarming tendency for the ministry to reduce or eliminate incentive funding after a program has been entrenched within the curriculum without increasing the level of basic support to replace the lost funds.

The result is that the cost of the program gets shifted to the local taxpayer. Recent examples of this practice include French as a second language, special education and co-operative education. The committee can surely understand the reluctance of boards to wholeheartedly embrace new program incentives such as reduction in class sizes for grades 1 and 2 for fear that the funding will be removed once the desired class sizes are achieved.

Recommendation: That the Ministry of Education refrain from making use of incentive funding and that, where incentive funding methods are presently employed, boards be advised of the time line for such funding.

The financing of education for French-language sections should not be based on residential evaluation in Windsor. The French-language section of the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board has 10.8 per cent of all Catholic elementary students, but only 6.5 per cent of residential evaluation. The government recognizes that the public school system has a mandate, which is to be open for the education of all pupils. In Windsor it is the French-language section of the Catholic board that provides education for all francophone pupils. This wider mandate necessitates a superior financing of the French section. French-language ratepayers should have the same level of taxation as anglophone ratepayers. Presently the local Catholic anglophone ratepayers must pay the additional cost.

Recommendation: That the federal and provincial governments pay the difference between the levels of taxation.

Residential taxes that are not specifically determined as French-language Catholic or public by ratepayers are all automatically designated by the municipal clerk as going to the English-language section of the public board.

Recommendation: That the undetermined taxes be divided among school boards and language sections in accordance with their respective ratios of pupils.

I would ask Mr Marchini to carry on, please.

Mr Marchini: Adequacy: This topic will be discussed under two headings: adequacy of operating grants and adequacy of capital financing.

Adequacy of operating grants: An argument can certainly be raised over the definition of just what "adequacy" is. Webster's dictionary defines "adequacy" as "the ability to satisfy a requirement; suitable."

The various educational programs and services that must be offered by law and those expected by ratepayers must be taken into consideration when one enters a discussion of adequacy of funding. They certainly have become the requirement of today.

Adequacy of funding is also directly linked to equity of funding. Equity of funding does not exist between assessment-rich and assessment-poor boards. Therefore, a strong argument can be made that there is insufficient or lack of adequacy of funding. This is especially true today since a greater share than ever before of the cost of education must be borne by the local taxpayer.

Much of the cause of the problem locally is the competition that exists between coterminous school boards. If one board initiates a new program—usually the board that is adequately funded, or the cost will have a lesser impact on the local ratepayer—the neighbouring board must also follow suit—and this is usually the separate coterminous board—or fear the loss of students to the other board.

This demand has put a tremendous strain on most boards to make ends meet. Under the present method of funding education, the ability of assessment-rich boards to spend in excess of any grants ceiling is obviously much less painful than that of assessment-poor boards. This is where the change is required.

We have provided on the following page information for you, some statistics that exist in our two boards. You can look at those at your leisure.

Our recommendations are, on page 8, that all overceiling expenditures be funded only by the local residential assessment; that the Ministry of Education review the adequacy of expenditure ceilings in order to determine what in fact is a reasonable level, taking into consideration all of the demands placed on the local school boards; that ministry initiatives be introduced sequentially, not congruently, in order to lessen the financial impact at any one time to the local ratepayers, and that once a new program has been introduced, the provincial contribution be maintained.

Adequacy of capital financing: First of all, we wish to congratulate and thank the government of Ontario for increasing the amount of funds it is dedicating to educational capital needs; that is, the \$1.2 billion over the four years commencing in 1988.

Sufficient classroom facilities with proper, up-to-date equipment for all of Ontario students are conditions which would have to exist before one could claim that educational capital financing is adequate. At the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board, these conditions do not exist at the present time.

Since the implementation of Bill 30, we have received two secondary school buildings from our coterminous board, for which we are thankful. However, one of the buildings is old and proving to be unsuited to the types of programs currently demanded at the secondary level. In addition, we have 11 portable classrooms on that particular site.

In both instances, the buildings were acquired in a virtually unfurnished state. The introduction of one new grade per year at these schools and the resultant need to furnish and equip these rooms without startup grants left our board with the impossible task of attempting to fill capital requirements with current operating funds.

At the present time, we have been placed in the unenviable position of starting a fifth secondary school in a closed elementary school leased from the Windsor Board of Education, again using current operating funds as a source of startup capital needs. Using the criteria identified above, it should be apparent to the committee that educational capital financing, as related at least to our board, is inadequate at the present time.

Our recommendation is that the ministry provide annual startup grants to separate schools boards for new schools and/or new grades which were opened as a result of Bill 30.

The province has presented a green paper, entitled *Financing Growth-Related Capital Needs*, which attempts to address the adequacy of capital issues. The main tenet of the plan is to have school boards charge a lot levy for new development within the area of the board, which will provide more local funds for capital construction. This will, in turn, allow the province to lever a greater amount of construction throughout the province with the same amount of funds by reducing the average rate of funding provided by the ministry from 75 per cent to 60 per cent.

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As Windsor is a non-high-growth area of the province, we continue to be concerned that the

majority of provincial funding will be directed to new pupil places in high-growth areas. While we recognize the needs of these areas as legitimate, we also expect the province to recognize the replacement of inadequate and condemned facilities as a legitimate need in areas such as ours. We further expect the provincial sharing ratio to reflect the fact that access to lot levies in these low-growth areas is severely restricted.

Our recommendations are:

1. That the ministry designate high-growth areas of the province.
2. That the definition of "pupil accommodation" in the Development Charges Act specifically exclude pupil accommodation made necessary as a result of the implementation of Bill 30.
3. That the ministry funding ratio for boards in non-high-growth areas be maintained at an average rate of 75 per cent in recognition of the severely restricted ability of boards in these areas to raise funds through lot levies.
4. That the designation of school support be added to the affidavit of land transfer.

Another idea presented in the green paper was the accessibility of Canada pension plan funds for long-term borrowing needs of school boards. It is anticipated that these funds would command a lower interest rate than could otherwise be attained. We hope this proposal becomes a reality.

Our recommendation is that the province consider expanding this long-term borrowing program to include borrowing from the Ontario municipal employees retirement system pension and the teachers' superannuation fund.

In our opinion, a major contributor to the current inadequacy of capital funding dilemma is a capital grant plan that uses antiquated pupil loadings and construction costs as a basis for funding; that is, 35 pupils at the elementary level even though the ministry is providing incentive operating grants to reduce the class size in grades 1 and 2 to 20 pupils, and 30 pupils at the secondary level while basic level courses are consistently 15 pupils or lower.

In addition, ministry-approved costs of construction projects are routinely set at 90 per cent of actual cost regardless of the efficiency with which a project is completed. This places a significant extra burden on local ratepayers. We urge the ministry to implement changes to the capital grant plan that will make it more relevant to the current educational and economic environment.

Our recommendations are:

1. That the ministry amend the capital grant plan by reducing rated class loadings to more accurately reflect the current educational environment.

2. That the ministry amend the capital grant plan to eliminate the gap between approved cost and actual cost of construction projects, in recognition of the fact that most projects must be tendered.

Mr Benzinger: In our view, the most pressing issue in education finance in this province is equity. Let us open our discussion by looking at the statement taken from the report of the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario.

"In considering the options for funding education, we are guided by the ideal of equal opportunity, particularly the concept of a universally accessible education system without the payment of direct fees for all qualified residents. The task, then, is to find the most appropriate balance between the province and the local school boards and ultimately, of course, the most equitable distribution of the financial burden among the taxpayers in Ontario."

By focusing on the statement "most appropriate balance between the province and the local school boards," we analysed the proportion of the educational expenditures of each partner for the period from 1976 to 1986. The enclosed statistics, graphs and tables illustrate dramatically some alarming trends:

- (a) The portion of elementary education expenditures funded by local taxes has tripled from 1976 to 1986.

- (b) Secondary school provincial grants increased until 1982 and are now showing a decline while expenditures have continued to rise.

- (c) At the elementary level, the provincial per-pupil grants have exceeded the consumer price index since 1980 but at a lesser rate than the per-pupil expenditures.

- (d) At the secondary level, the provincial per-pupil grants have consistently been below both the consumer price index and the per-pupil expenditures, leaving the local taxpayers to pay a greater portion of the cost.

Pages 13 to 22 illustrate those mentioned facts.

It is our contention that there has been, and continues to be a deliberate transition of the cost of education from the province to the local ratepayers. Boards such as ours with a small assessment base have been the hardest hit in the transition.

Enclosed in the brief are statistics providing comparisons with our coterminous board, the

Windsor Board of Education. Let me present a summary of these:

1. In regard to enrolment, for every student in the Windsor separate school board, there are 1.1 in the Windsor Board of Education.

2. For every \$1 raised from residential assessment by the Windsor separate school board, the Windsor Board of Education can raise \$1.70.

3. For every \$1 raised from commercial assessment by the Windsor separate school board, the Windsor Board of Education can raise \$8.

4. On the same mill rate, for every \$100 raised by taxpayers of the Windsor separate school board, the Windsor Board of Education can raise \$229.

From the previous appendices, we have attempted to illustrate:

(a) as it currently operates, there is a disparity in equity in the financing of education.

(b) assessment-poor boards cannot match the expenditures of assessment-rich boards.

(c) the money available for grants is not sufficient to compensate assessment-poor boards for the discrepancies and the lack of local revenue.

(d) the degree of educational opportunity available to a student has come to depend on the accidents of geographical location and/or the system chosen by the parents of the child.

Statistics on this are on pages 24 and 25.

We would like to emphasize that the proposed changes begin to address some of these inequities.

Our recommendations:

1. That the select committee support the initiatives taken by the government to introduce greater equity into educational financing.

2. That designated commercial and industrial assessment be shared between coterminous boards based on their respective enrolments.

3. That this process be phased in over the next three years rather than the proposed six years.

4. That separate school boards that have experienced unplanned deficits due to this inequity be compensated by a one-time grant.

5. That during the phase-in period of access to commercial and industrial assessment, the Ministry of Education provide compensating grants in inversely proportional amounts to the compensating grants that will be paid to public school boards, in recognition of the inequity of funding.

Mr Janisse: Thank you for this opportunity and for the attention given to us during our presentation. We would be pleased to respond to

any questions you might have on any areas in which you require clarification.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. We have five minutes or so left.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Your brief is very useful in terms of the list of recommendations that you provided us with as well as the statistics, to which I am now addicted. I do not think I can get by a day without some good graphs now, and so I find weekends very tough. I am going to encourage my children to start drawing me graphs on a regular basis to do with allowances and things like that.

At any rate, I do not want to actually dwell very much on the specific recommendations that flow from your report, although there are some suggestions there that we have not heard before which I think might be useful to us as they address some of the specific complaints we have actually heard elsewhere. I think that would be helpful.

I want to ask some more philosophical questions, if I might, rather than the specifics you addressed at the moment. The first would be, just to get one stat cleared up that I am not clear about, what percentage of your operating funds does the province assume at the moment? How much is picked up off the local base and how much off the province?

Mr Marchini: On the operating funds that are ordinary, it is approximately 75 per cent; on the extraordinary, it is approximately 85 per cent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought that is what I read for the ordinary, but I was not sure how it averaged out. I want to know whether or not you think your board is more or less accountable to your contributors than is the public board, your coterminous board.

Mr Janisse: I really do not know their particular position with their ratepayers but I certainly know ours. We really are because they keep a finger on us every time we move. But I cannot respond for the public board.

1530

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess the point I am trying to make is that a lot is made these days about the finances, about the local assessment being so key to that accountability, and yet that assessment varies so widely across the province. I think every board would tell us that it was as accountable as the next board, coterminous or, say, a county board, which has much less revenue than you have.

There is an addiction as well, it seems to me, to this notion that the assessment base, which I think is at the base of the inequity in the system, frankly, is what is key to your autonomy and key to your accountability. As an elector myself who tries to figure out when my local board is responsible for something and not the province, which has not passed on the money or has conditional money placed on it, I find it very hard to draw those lines these days.

I guess I would like to ask why it is that you would think the pooling notion, that equalization concept, should be limited to the two wealthy boards in the area, if I could put it that way, in assessment terms—yourselves and the public board—and not include the county boards that are adjacent to you and do not have access to those kinds of things but obviously feed into the same economic centre as you do.

I am trying to be a bit of a devil's advocate here in terms of your assumptions that we just need a little bit of fixing up of what the province is doing rather than a major overhaul.

Mr Marchini: If I could respond to the first part of your question, on the 75 per cent of our ordinary that we receive in grant, you must remember that is up to our grant ceiling. Over and above the grant ceiling, where all boards are spending, that has to be raised locally. Again, when we have an assessment base where we only receive 10 per cent of the commercial base in the city, therefore most of that overceiling expenditure has to be funded through the residential base. I think our trustees are in a position where they are more accountable because of that fact, because the other board does fund that additional overceiling expenditure in great part through the commercial base.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Are you going to be less accountable when you get your share of it?

Mr Marchini: No, I would not think so.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I did not think you would make that argument.

Mr Marchini: I am speaking of the present time and the position they are placed in. Although the 75 per cent and the 85 per cent, when you look at it, seem to indicate that a great share of our expenditures is funded by the province, it is only to that grant ceiling. I want to make that point clear.

Your second argument regarding the county versus the city and a share of the commercial base is a valid point. I do not pretend to have an answer to that at this point in time. I do not know if Mike or Amadee would have any comments.

That was the argument, I think, that was proposed during the Macdonald commission regarding pooling provincially, for that very reason.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not expect boards to deal with these kinds of matters because you have to survive day to day and the crunch that the boards have been put under, pre and post Bill 30, from the various perspectives, are obvious. We seem to be caught up in a historical context here in terms of how we fund education that is quite different than the experiences of many of our sister provinces.

I wonder if you have actually given that any thought in terms of the model we are using. There have been complaints about its inequities going back as far as I can remember. Yet other provinces have moved, to British Columbia's 80-20 split, to Quebec's 90-10 split with the province taking the 90 per cent and to New Brunswick's 100 per cent of funding, with a very different kind of role for boards and a very different kind of accountability for boards.

I am wondering if you have ever had discussions about whether we should be tinkering with the present system and trying to equalize it out a little bit more or whether we should be trying to adjust it fundamentally.

Mr Benzinger: I believe that more or less a consensus from the little discussions that took place in the last three or four years would be to get close to the 60-40 split, equally distributed, would leave enough local authority, local input and local accountability for the tax dollars, yet provide sufficient funds to deal with education as such.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will not lay this on you because I do not think it is fair to do it, but at some point or other I really want to try to figure out, because I could not figure it out from the Macdonald commission at all, why it is that the 40 per cent split was seen to be the appropriate magic number, again spread across the province, given an understanding of how broad that range would be which I presume for places like Metropolitan Toronto would mean no change at all from what it has presently, and why that does anything to deal with the accountability questions or the other matters of equity.

I do not think that is fair to be thrown at you. I think that is more in terms of some of the presumptions we have been operating on.

The Vice-Chairman: You do not have to turn your mikes on when you answer. The Hansard folks will turn them on for you, and if they will

turn Mr Johnston's off, we will get on with the meeting.

Mr Keyes: Just shortly, if we are trying to provide equality of educational opportunity and equity in funding, bringing those two things to mind, how do you see the government perhaps controlling some of the areas? In your adequacy recommendation 1, all over-ceiling expenditures should be funded only by the local residential assessment. You have not made any mention there, but there has been some suggestion that perhaps the government should try to control, as well, the over-ceiling expenditures.

Most people have advocated increased ceilings to better reflect the costs of educating people, but if we are to provide equality of opportunity and equity in funding, do you not see the need for the province to perhaps limit the amount of expenditures a board has, as it used to do?

Mr Marchini: If I could make a comment on that, I understand what you are saying. I think the first step would be to put the boards within a jurisdictional area on equal footing, that being to any expenditure ceiling. If we were all spending at that level, just at the expenditure ceiling as it exists today, there would be no problem. The problem that has occurred is that 99.9 per cent of the boards are spending above that ceiling. There is a need to do that. That is where the discrepancy or the inadequacy or the adequacy or whatever you want to call it occurs: when there is a board that has the base of the residential and commercial assessment to fund those expenditures versus another board that does not.

If there is no change in the commercial-industrial assessment issue, if the ministry just increased ceilings, it would obviously allow boards to spend to a greater level and get a greater amount of that in grant, but it still would not correct the situation for expenditures over the ceiling. That is where our problem exists today. Our recommendation of having the overceiling expenditure funded only by the residential base would put the two boards on an equal footing, because in our area, for example, the base is almost equally split.

Mr Keyes: My point that flows from that is that it does not provide equality of educational opportunity. Are you not going to be just a bit more magnanimous in your recommendations and agree that the pooling perhaps may have to extend beyond just coterminous boards, that it may have to extend more on a regional basis?

You would be in a situation in Windsor where, as you see the change of the pooling of the

assessment, you and the public board in Windsor would be in a more favourable position than the two boards within the county. If you really believe in equity of funding, is that not what you are going to have to see yourself coming towards? With no ceiling placed by the province anywhere on your over-ceiling expenditures, that is where you potentially quickly develop inequality in educational opportunity.

The Vice-Chairman: That was a question, I think.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It had sort of a quizzical ending to it.

The Vice-Chairman: He ended by saying, "Don't you agree?"

Mr Marchini: That is the same question that I think was raised over here about the county not sharing the commercial base of the city.

Mr Keyes: Do you have a comment on ceiling limitations by the ministry?

Mr Marchini: I do not believe there should be a ceiling limitation. With the overceiling expenditures being assessed on only the residential assessment base, I think the controls there would be placed on a school board itself.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would not control Metro.

Mr Keyes: That is right, Ottawa or Metro.

Mr Marchini: I guess in our area that control would exist.

Mr Villeneuve: I notice here—I guess there is probably some explanation for it—that your board has 10.8 per cent of all Catholic elementary students and yet only 6.5 per cent residential assessment.

Mr Janisse: That is bilingual. That is the French section only.

Mr Villeneuve: That is the French; okay. Was there a problem in enumeration in order to identify, are you aware? This seems to be a little out of kilter. Do they have the double majority thing? I know that was kind of general across the province when enumeration came out. There was a major problem in identifying, and people were not too sure how to address it.

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Mr Janisse: There was a major problem in that respect, but I think possibly the first time around they learned an awful lot to make sure the next time it would be totally different.

Mr Villeneuve: Also, on that page you mention that you do not want to see the ministry make use of incentive funding. We had kind of a

reverse situation this morning from one of your colleagues, who said there should be creative incentives to promote efficiency, to promote commonsense things like sharing where it works, in transportation and in facilities and in teaching staff. Could you comment on that a bit? I realize that the ministry has up until now said: "You spend money and we'll spend money and we'll see how much money we can find to throw at it." I think we have to look at it in a slightly different way.

Mr Janisse: I think what we are saying is that if they start spending it, do not let us get a first-class organization going and then forget us the next year. This is what has been one of our problems here, totally, where they are just dropping out of the picture. We ask them, "What about those grants?" They say, "Oh, we did give you them at one time, eh?" This is why we are having our problem right here today.

Mr Villeneuve: That certainly is very well put in your second recommendation: that if they are going to support you now, make sure they tell you what is going to be happening a couple of years down the road, whether they will or whether they will not, and then you will make a decision as you see fit.

The Vice-Chairman: I would like to thank the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board for its presentation and taking the time to come before us today.

Mr Janisse: Thank you for having us.

Mr Marchini: If I could just make one comment, on page 23, there is a typo and I think it is rather an important one. Under point 4, instead of \$229, it should read \$290.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much.

Our next presenter is the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I would remind members that we should try to stay within our time allotment, if possible, for the rest of the day.

Mr Keyes: Are you trying to get to a ball game or something?

The Vice-Chairman: No; the plane is leaving at 6:20 and that is the last plane of the night and we have hearings tomorrow.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Has the colour of this thing got anything to do with the local representation?

The Vice-Chairman: Obviously, before I even open it, I can tell it is a very sensitive brief and well thought out. We have set aside about 30 minutes for your presentation and we would like

you to introduce your panel and begin when you are ready.

LONDON AND MIDDLESEX COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Price: My name is Tim Price. I have the privilege of making the board's presentation to the select committee today. I will introduce those at the table with me and two others who are with us in the body of the building. To my left is the board vice-chairman, Joe Kraemer, and to his left is the chairman of our French-language section, Agnes Kraemer. There is some degree of relation between the two of them. To my right is our director of education, Ken Regan, and to Mr Regan's right is our superintendent of business, Jim Hardy. Also present here today are Don McMullin, who is a member of the business and finance committee of our board, and Robert Laplante, who is the assistant superintendent of student services of our board.

Because I am much better working with a script, I propose to read what you have in front of you.

The board of trustees of the London and Middlesex county Roman Catholic schools appreciates the opportunity to present this brief to the select committee on education. The trustees of the board wish to thank the members of the committee for undertaking the important task of examining the financing of education in Ontario.

"Equality of educational opportunity" has almost become a cliché in modern times. As such, it merely illustrates how complex a task it is to put this ideal into practice. Equality between schools in town and country, between schools in more affluent and less affluent sections of the same region, between faster- and slower-growing areas, between separate schools and public schools has not been achieved to this day, in spite of the many efforts of past governments.

The problem of financing for separate schools in Ontario has passed through many phases. In the earliest of times, when the minority right of dissent was established, it was simultaneously provided that minority schools would receive their "due proportion" of public funds. The general principle laid down in September 1841 was, "in the same manner as if the (separate) common schools were established and maintained under the common (public) school commissioners."

Today the separate schools of the province are providing publicly supported education for approximately one third of the students of Ontario.

Equality of educational opportunity for all children, if it is to mean anything to those students, must be equality where they are, where they have a right to be. At present there is no equality.

In the city of London the public and separate school systems serve children who live in the same social, economic and environmental neighbourhoods but attend schools that are significantly different because of the economic conditions that control their respective school boards. By way of example, each school board in London is facing rapid expansion at the elementary level and must construct new classrooms. In 1989 each board received a capital allocation of \$3 million from the government of Ontario for a new elementary school.

The board of education built one elementary school with its allocation. The separate school board built two elementary schools and a nine-room addition to a third school with its allocation. The board of education paid its share of the new school construction from its reserves. The separate school board is preparing to issue debentures for its share of the \$3-million expenditure.

Please understand that we are not criticizing the London Board of Education for its expenditure of \$3 million on one school. We recognize it to be an excellent building that contains many important learning areas that we cannot afford. We, however, are sad that our children must do without those facilities and we believe that better financial procedures would enable all children to have them.

Assessment-poor boards such as ours must have a chance to match the expenditures of their assessment-rich neighbours if equality is to be achieved. Children in the same city, in the same area of that city, should not be housed in inferior facilities because of obsolete financial rules.

Normally, every school board vested with full powers and entire educational responsibilities should enjoy equal control over its financial resources, with the provincial funding mechanism serving as the instrument to equalize access to resources. In today's circumstances, however, this principle does not apply. In 1989, the London and Middlesex Catholic school board has struggled under severe restraint to balance its budget, while the local board of education has been able to amass a multimillion-dollar reserve.

While the school population is rapidly expanding at both levels, the separate school board has been forced to reduce its 1989 expenditures on supplies, textbooks and equipment to 85 per cent

of the 1988 expenditures. All maintenance expenditures, except for emergency needs, have been eliminated from our budget. A collective agreement was negotiated between our board and its teachers without any improvements in working conditions, benefits or special allowances. These drastic actions were necessary because operating grants are not sufficient to compensate assessment-poor boards such as ours for the lack of local revenue.

The rate of provincial contributions to education has declined rapidly over the past decade. The time has come to break this pattern. Not only must the most equitable system of financing be agreed upon, but it should be passed and promptly completed in order to quickly alleviate the existing inequities. We ask you as provincial legislators to strive to ensure that educational opportunity does not depend on geographical location and/or the publicly funded system chosen by the parents.

On 18 May 1989, the Honourable Chris Ward, then Minister of Education, announced a plan to ensure greater fairness and equity in the distribution of local and provincial revenues between Ontario's boards of education and Roman Catholic separate school boards. The announcement, with its commitment to increased provincial grants for all boards, was welcomed, especially by separate school boards. These actions by the province can do much to ensure access to equality of opportunity.

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We believe the people of Ontario are committed to justly serving the needs of all children in Ontario in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. We wish to pay tribute to the government of Ontario and the members of the provincial Parliament for the momentous steps towards equity that have been taken and that have been promised. We look forward with great anticipation to new legislation and provincial grant changes.

We offer the following suggestions for your consideration. You will see from the brief that they have headings; I will not read those.

The government has announced its intention to allow separate school boards to share in the industrial-commercial tax base, and it is to be applauded for taking this historic step. There are, however, certain aspects of the announcement that raise concerns among separate schools or indeed, for that matter, among all assessment-poor boards whether public or separate. If the children of Ontario are to receive equal educational opportunities, regardless of whether they

attend a public or a separate school, live in a large urban centre or an isolated country setting or are educated in English or French, these concerns must be addressed so that the funding mechanism is fair and equitable to all.

The suggested implementation of the plan over a six-year term is simply too long. Separate schools are already desperately behind in resources and cannot wait six years to receive equal funding. The relative gaps between coterminous separate and public boards will continue to grow in the six-year period; they will not diminish. A shorter time frame is necessary if separate boards are to continue to function in a manner comparative to their coterminous public boards. We therefore recommend that a term of not more than three years should be used to implement the sharing of commercial and industrial assessment.

The fundamental basis of how corporate taxation is to be shared must also be readdressed. Corporations and industries operate on a province-wide basis. The location of a head office, factory or mine in a particular municipality may have little to do with the number of students who are to be educated by a particular board. For instance, all consumers and taxpayers, regardless of where they live, contribute to the property taxes paid by all banks on their head office buildings, not just those in Toronto, and thus they deserve a share of such taxation. Similarly, the fact that an automobile plant may be located in a township should not dictate that all of its education taxes should go to one particular county board of education, when many of the children of the workers at that plant may live and be educated in some other city or county; by way of example, the Cami plant at Ingersoll and the Ford plant at Talbotville.

The proposed system of sharing—that is, regional—will exacerbate problems where the commercial-industrial assessment base is already low, for example, in various rural counties. This will lead to separate and public coterminous boards fighting over scarce resources, and neither of them will be a winner. Students in Ontario must have access to the entire industrial-commercial base of the entire province, not just that of their own particular city, county or district. We therefore recommend that if the principle of equity is to be observed, then sharing must be done on a province-wide basis.

At the very least, the system needs to be changed to reflect the total proportion of residential taxpayers in the county or district as a whole, depending on how a board is organized, and not just an individual municipality. Again,

the proportion of taxpayers in a municipality where a large plant or mine might be located may not, and most likely will not, reflect the proportion of such residents of a board as a whole and the sharing of its taxes to coterminous boards.

We therefore recommend that many of the problems associated with regional disparity would be eliminated if the province adopted a system that shared taxes in proportion to the number of students a board served rather than on the residential-farm tax base, which may not fairly represent the demands placed upon a board.

The proposed method of sharing assessment encompasses only publicly traded companies, which is much narrower than what would have been appropriate, in our view. This system will lead to problems of definition and exceptions that might not at first be apparent. Does the definition of a publicly traded company include subsidiaries of large foreign-owned parent companies that may not be traded on any specific stock exchange in the world? Some foreign-parent companies are technically private companies that are owned directly or indirectly by a foreign government or agency.

There will be problems, as well, in identifying companies that are only partially owned or are joint venture companies but are effectively controlled by a publicly traded company. There could be particular problems at the second or third level of ownership.

Will the property owned by mutual insurance companies be subject to pooling? These are policyholder-owned companies and are not publicly traded. Almost every township has a mutual fire insurance company that will not meet the definition of a publicly traded company. How are these going to be included?

Will the property of large private companies that operate in the public domain, for example, Eaton's, be included, and will separate school boards have access to their assessment? Such companies should be able to allocate part of their assessment to separate schools other than what is currently allowed. What about credit unions, co-operatives and other similar organizations, all of which are not publicly traded companies?

In our view, the definition needs to be broadened to include the abovementioned entities. The term "traded" needs to be removed and a broader definition of "public" substituted for the current one. We therefore recommend that a fairer approach would be to deem all designated assessments as public and to share that fully. The

current approach is still too restrictive, and provides for a disproportionate amount of assessment to go to the public boards by default. If the aim is to give separate boards a greater share of the pool, then barriers must not be erected.

The province has indicated that no public board will suffer as a result of the introduction of the pooling of assessment. It has indicated that grants will be increased to all boards through changes in grant ceilings to ensure that this does not happen. In all but a few cases, this is supposed to mean that both the public and separate boards in a coterminous area will receive additional revenue. While this change is commendable, it is not clear that this extra revenue will mean that the funds for education overall will increase.

The past few years have seen an erosion in the basic grant ceiling. This has caused a shift in the funding of education by the province to the local taxpayer. This shift has been a serious blow to low-assessment boards, which are chiefly separate, who cannot pass on the additional burden to their local taxpayers. If this trend continues, it could mean that whatever separate boards gain from the new pool of assessment of publicly traded companies will be lost to the erosion of the province's overall support. We therefore recommend that care must be taken by the province to ensure that the gains from the sharing of commercial assessment are not offset by a decrease in other government grants, or assessment-poor boards could well be worse off than they are now.

There are also a number of issues to be dealt with in connection with the financing of capital projects. Under the present method of capital allocations, projects are often funded over a two- to three-year period. Given the current need for facilities, boards are forced to build well ahead of this time frame and must borrow to bridge the gap in financing. The interest costs associated with such borrowing are fully borne from local funds. It would be more desirable if provincial funds for projects were preflowed, as was done in 1989-90.

We therefore recommend that when a project receives program approval, payment of the provincial grant should be released on some specific phased basis. This method would significantly reduce the need for bridge financing. The cost of any interim financing should form part of the approved cost in order to allow boards to receive grant on such costs. While this is not the most desirable alternative, it should be the least that the province is prepared to enact.

Given the need for new pupil places in many parts of the province as well as the huge buildup of required renovations and alterations, the capital allocations are still not adequate, notwithstanding the significant—we recognize—increase in them over the past three years. The gap between the announced allocations and the request is enormous and continues to grow. We recommend that the province has to put significantly more resources into capital funding just to fund the most urgent of projects and, in particular, more funds must be earmarked for renovations and repairs to the ageing stock of school buildings in Ontario.

We further recommend that the whole process pertaining to capital expenditure financing must be overhauled. The time frame involved is far too long and should be shortened. Boards have mushrooming capital needs, and the present system does not react quickly enough to meet those needs. Capital forecasts are now submitted in the fall of each year, and announcements pertaining to them are made in the following spring. As previously pointed out, the allocations are often spread over three years. Boards that are not successful in receiving a capital allocation one year must wait a full year to reapply.

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Having received an allocation, on the other hand, a board must then go through a multistep approval process with the ministry and both of the regional and central offices, regardless of the size or the complexity of the project. There are considerable delays in obtaining approvals as a result of the enormous number of projects under way throughout the province.

We therefore recommend that the approval system could be significantly improved if some of the steps in the process were eliminated or consolidated, if more authority were given to the regional office and if more resources were given to the central office in Toronto to allow them to cope with the tremendous backlog of projects.

It is recognized that the current pupil load criteria are unrealistic, especially in light of throne speech initiatives, other political realities, local contractual agreements and educational requirements. School boards do not have as much control over local contractual agreements as the ministry at times seems to infer, since most often precedent-setting awards are determined by arbitrators in negotiation impasses.

We therefore recommend that new loading factors need to be developed and implemented that reflect the reality of classroom needs in the 1990s.

We recommend further that the province should develop and encourage the use of alternative methods of funding capital projects. These could include the use of Canada pension plan funds, leasing, buyback arrangements, etc. The present capital grants plan is significantly out of date with respect to formulas and values. It does not facilitate alternative financing methods, such as long-term leasing or a situation where a developer might build a school for a board on a buyback arrangement. Given the financing needs in the future, all reasonable alternatives should be pursued and adopted.

Lot levies may not produce revenues for a few years, whereas the rate of provincial support has already dropped to 60 per cent. This creates a significant gap that the boards must themselves take up. If the reduction in provincial grants is to be tied to the introduction of lot levies, the two should take place simultaneously. It is only reasonable. We recommend therefore that the announced grant reduction with respect to new pupil places be deferred until lot levies are introduced and until boards have accumulated sufficient funds from lot levies to at least offset the reduced grant.

The availability of sites is governed by local housing conditions and development activities. We recommend that provincial funds should be available year-round to assist, where possible, with the acquisition of small parcels of land to increase site sizes for landlocked sites. This proposal is more likely to assist smaller boards with little or no reserve funds. There is a need to acquire land for future uses. Boards might use their funds to purchase the land, but would recover them later when the need is verified by the ministry.

In conclusion, the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board strongly supports the direction that the government of Ontario is taking in its proposed changes in education financing. It is attempting to find a solution to the problem of equality that plagues many school boards across the province. When an equitable distribution of financial resources has been arranged, it will be possible for all boards to come to grips with the problems of accountability and the adequacy of programs and services.

All boards as equals will be able to focus their energies on goals, purposes and outcomes and establish criteria that suit the needs of this province and its children. We urge the members of this committee to support and encourage the government in its efforts to create equality for all

children, and we wish especially to thank you for the opportunity to be present here today and make this presentation.

All of the foregoing is respectfully submitted by the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Mr Reycraft: I thank Mr Price and the other representatives of the London-Middlesex separate school board for their presentation this afternoon. I do talk with them frequently enough that I do not need to monopolize the committee's time this afternoon.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought this your only chance to get to them.

Mr Reycraft: However, I do think that the miracle of the loaves and the fishes needs to be expanded on a little bit here. I am referring to the situation with the addition and with the two new elementary schools that you built with the \$3 million that was allocated this year. How does the size of the two new schools you built compare with the one the London board built?

Mr Regan: Our one junior-kindergarten-to-grade-8 school is about three quarters of the size of the single school that the board of education built. There are about 350 pupils in the separate school that has been opened, and I think 100 more than that in the public school that was opened, approximately.

Mr Reycraft: I am just trying to get a comparison of the number of pupil places they got for their \$3 million and the number of pupil places you got for yours.

Mr Regan: Altogether? We got about 700 places, I think, and they got from 450 to 500.

Mr Reycraft: I cannot imagine that the trustees who represent the part of Middlesex county that the new St Vincent de Paul School in Strathroy serves would accept anything less than adequate accommodation for students there. How do you explain the greater value for dollars that you got with this capital construction?

Mr Regan: I think if you looked at the two buildings you could see the difference. Ours is adequate. Theirs is very good accommodation. One school has corridors that are adequate for students to pass freely going in two directions, the other has very ample space for children to stand and talk while two groups of students move. If you look at the office spaces, the washroom spaces, the staff room spaces, the gymnasium, the finishes, the exterior block work compared to brick, and design work in the brick and all of those other things, they are easily identifiable in the two schools.

The board said we have to get this many spaces out of \$3 million and the architect was instructed to build spaces at the lowest possible cost. I think it came in at about \$75 a square foot for the schools that were built by the separate school board. A house costs \$75 a square foot today.

Mr Reyecraft: This will not totally resolve your new pupil place problem for the long term. Do you expect to follow the same kind of construction model in the future?

Mr Price: I suppose that depends on how much money we are given.

Mr Reyecraft: And perhaps what the reaction of the parents in Strathroy and Byron is to their new schools.

Mr Price: To date I have heard of no unhappiness. I am sure they would be even happier to have a school like Rick Hansen Public School.

Mr Regan: The separate school board has classroom spaces, a library, a gymnasium and the other things you have to have. It has no ancillary spaces of any significance. There is nothing there in the way of specialized rooms or any of those things that would be desirable in an elementary school. I suppose the Roman Catholic population of London and Middlesex is accustomed to operating and they would say it is better than a portable, which was probably the only alternative that existed for them. Most of those children moved out of portables into the new building.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just want to comment on your conclusion. Although I liked very much what preceded it in terms of the lot levies timing, and I noticed certain members of the committee wincing when they thought about the ramifications of that, I do think it makes some sense in terms of economics. I have a little more difficulty with the notion that you will deal with accountability after you get equity. It seems to me that accountability has to be built into the system all the way along. I presume that was just one of the flows of language rather than something you meant literally.

Mr Price: Mr Johnston, if I might address that, the gap has hit us critically because we are building. We have received approval for a new high school. Our board had assumed that the roughly 75 per cent grant ratio would apply. Of course, we do not have lot levies yet. We now have found out that the 60 per cent rule will apply, leaving us roughly a \$2-million gap that we now have to somehow finance for this high

school. So it seems logical that the two should come together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It certainly sounds like something we should be considering as a practical recommendation. I did not mean to try to belittle it; I was more attaching whimsical humour to the accountability question instead.

I wanted to come to the point of province-wide pooling, though, that you are suggesting. So you know that the \$180 million to \$210 million to \$230 million figure—no one really knows at the moment the compensation package that is involved in there—is based on a very small shift in real terms of the commercial and industrial base. Estimates I saw for the commercial and industrial pooling on a province-wide basis would make about a 30 per cent shift.

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If you then think of the compensation package the province would have had to put in for that, I think you can see why it is not only not moving to a three-year introduction of the much smaller regionalized pooling but it has not even attempted the province-wide pooling, because of the effects on the provincial coffers that would be there. I just throw that out as part of the reality of where they are going.

I want to raise the issue, because a number of Catholic boards have raised it with us, about this notion of moving to a student-based rather than a contributor-based presumption so that the public board does not get, *de facto*, a large amount of assistance from the commercial side of things especially but also the regular property tax that might otherwise go to meet the larger immediate school needs of the Catholic coterminous board.

Surely the difficulty there is that as long as we have the property tax as your base rather than a provincial base, and as long as we have boards being elected with specific mandates, one to a Catholic contributor and the other to a non-Catholic contributor, it will be very hard to have that money go on a per-student basis. It has to be on a contributor basis, because that is, again, the accountability mechanism for yourselves as boards.

I wonder if you would reply to that. On that localized funding basis, I do not know how you can move to a per-student basis when the individual contributor can say: "I don't want my money going to the other system, even if there are more students in it at the moment." It could be a Catholic board or it could be a public board but, "That is where my money should be going," either as commercial or individual property tax.

That is why I have had some difficulty with this concept that has been raised lately by Catholic boards.

Mr Hardy: I understand what you are saying, and I do not think we want to move away from the principle that is inherent in the Education Act and well established in law, that the Catholic ratepayer has a choice to support either the separate school system or the public school system. It is incumbent upon us to be able to attract him and his support to our system.

However, a small example might show our difficulty the other way. In London, we educate something in the neighbourhood of 23 to 24 per cent of the combined city and county students. We are currently receiving something in the neighbourhood of 17 per cent of the residential tax and approximately six per cent of the commercial-industrial tax.

That gap will not erode. There are a number of reasons for the gap, and certainly choice of support is one of those. There is no question about that. That is our problem. We have the mechanism, if you like, to work on that, and we are prepared to do that.

But I think there are other factors which really say that if we are going to look upon students, wherever they are, perhaps the education dollar should flow with the student. The student should be the centre of this. If we are saying the equality of education should focus on the student, then surely the child in the separate school, in the county and in the city, in the north or in the south or wherever he may be, deserves some basic amount of support.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not disagree with the principle; all I am basically saying is that, with that principle, it seems to me it is incumbent upon having primarily a provincially funded system. If you base it instead on the boards elected, one on a denominational basis and one on a nondenominational basis, I do not know how you can do that. That is why I think if you want that move, and I see the logic of it, then you have to move to a much more province-wide basis for the funding, not a localized basis.

Mr Regan: Of course, you can separate the residential tax base from the commercial-industrial base, as they have done in British Columbia, where all of that industrial-commercial base is collected by the province and distributed. The residential base remains with the local board and that is where the accountability is, where the taxpayer who goes and elects the board is also the person who pays the bill.

You can tie that accountability then to the level of expenditure, because if you set a ceiling for that residential base and the board chooses to go above it, it is charged directly to those people. They know they are paying more for a service that their board is providing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not disagree with that. I was just pointing out that with the reality of where we are at the moment, I do not think that principle can fly. You have to change the notion of where the collection takes place, as you are suggesting.

Mr Villeneuve: First, the discrepancies in assessment are always intriguing. Was it primarily people's cognizant decisions, were there problems in enumeration, is your tax base requiring more money? Why is there that discrepancy when you have almost a quarter of the students and 17 per cent of the assessment?

Mr Hardy: There are a number of reasons and I do not think we are in a position to give you an exhaustive list or say how much of the gap is attributed to what reason. As I said earlier, there is no doubt the conscious decision of certain Catholics not to support the separate school system. That is their choice, for whatever reason.

As you must be aware, under the present rules, when any of us moves today there will be a gap between the time that we will once again become separate school supporters, assuming that we know what to do to do that. There are impediments, to say the least. There are difficulties to maintain one's separate school support upon moving. When have not addressed it in here, but certainly that question has been raised in other times to deal with that problem.

Also, the figures I quoted to you really represent not so much the numbers of people but the value of assessment, which of course is the trigger. There may be differences, on average, in the economic value of a separate school supporter's house or residence to a public school supporter's. I have no way of knowing that but, as I say, there are a number of reasons. The one we are prepared to accept, and the challenge that we should have is the first one, though, the question of conscious support by Catholics. That one is our duty and we can do something about. The other ones we cannot do very much about.

To go back to Mr Johnston's point, the question of sharing on a student basis is dealing only with that sharing of commercial assessment, not residential assessment.

Mr Villeneuve: You touched on lot levies and certainly made a suggestion that we had not heard before, that lot levies would not trigger in until

such time as there was a pool of capital. I gather, therefore, that the 75 per cent funding should stay in place for capital requirements until such time as that would trigger. Are you really in favour of lot levies or are you just that way on it? Just put it on the record.

Mr Keyes: Yes or no.

Mr Price: Speaking on behalf of the board, the board has taken the position that it is not in favour of lot levies for a number of reasons. There is the belief that, education being a matter that affects all in the community, costing should be spread across the whole community, not just new home buyers. In fact, I believe there has probably been a number of missives from our board to a number of people in Toronto opposing lot levies.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You did not tell me that.

Mr Reyecraft: I forgot to ask that question.

Interjection: Any missives in your direction?

Mr Price: Not missiles.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is next.

Mr Price: The board is on record as opposing lot levies.

Mr Villeneuve: One final question: I notice you have had to go into quite a bit of capital construction, primarily due to the full funding, Bill 30, or primarily due to an expanding population, a combination thereof and possibly some of the ministry requirements that have, all of a sudden, kind of hit you at the same time. Would you just comment on that a little bit?

Mr Regan: The board is faced with growth at both the elementary and the secondary levels. Certainly, the massive jump in enrolment took place at the secondary level over the past four years. It went from approximately 1,000 to nearly 4,000 students in that period of time at the secondary. Those pupil places have had to be provided and are still not there in many cases, but there was also a growth of about five per cent in the elementary population over the past two years. It is growth in both panels.

Mr Reyecraft: And excellent retention rates, too.

Mr Regan: Excellent retention rates at the secondary level, yes. Outstanding, 105 per cent, 106 per cent at that grade 12 level.

Mr Villeneuve: That is good retention for sure.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much on behalf of the committee to the London-Middlesex Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Interjections.

The Chairman: We will just ignore all the shots going across the table and carry on with our meeting. Thanks for coming. We appreciate your brief.

1620

Our next presenter is the Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I believe William Donohue, the chairman, is here.

Mrs O'Neill: May I ask when we are going to adjourn? There are two presenters left.

The Vice-Chairman: If we can stay within the time frame, which we do not seem to be able to do, we can be out of here by about 20 after five, by the look of things.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay, because I think they should both be granted equal time.

The Vice-Chairman: We have a flight at 6:20, I believe. I think Mr Furlong has one at six o'clock. We must make it because we have hearings at Queen's Park tomorrow. I would ask committee members to try to hold their questions if they can, but we certainly do not want to cut your presentation short. We have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation which will include questions. I am going to have to be a little more ruthless in cutting committee members off.

Please, if you would introduce yourself and your panel and proceed when you are ready.

LAMBTON COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Donohue: I have with me today our director of education, John Ross, and our vice-chairman of the school board, Father Paul Milne. It is my pleasure to address you today.

The select committee on education has sought input on the financing of education in Ontario. Specifically, the committee has asked the presenters to address equity, adequacy and accountability. We find these concepts quite interrelated. However, we will attempt to deal with them independently.

Accountability: We believe that school boards are extremely accountable for their actions. The local autonomy of school boards, through elected officials, makes them very accountable to a variety of interested parties. Ratepayers, parents, teachers, administrators, trustees and a variety of staff and other interest groups have a great deal of input and participation in how and where budget funds are expended and how and where revenues are derived.

It is our opinion, however, that there are several factors at work that are hampering

accountability at the local level. These other factors are directly related to the other topics you have asked us to deal with.

We are concerned that local school boards are expected to be accountable for their financial expenditures when currently so many programs are laid on from the provincial level. These programs include such things as the 20-to-1 class size at the grades 1 and 2 level, computer-assisted instruction, mandatory junior kindergarten, optional full-day kindergarten, textbook incentive grants, pay equity legislation, health and safety legislation—and the list goes on.

We do not take exception to any of these programs. All are quite worthy programs and we endorse and support them. However, we are extremely concerned about our ability to fund such programs. Some of the above programs do not receive any provincial funding. Our board has experienced severe financial hardship over the past two years. In our opinion, many of the mandated programs, both funded and unfunded, have contributed to our financial hardship and therefore we may appear to be failing in an accountability role. Yet these things are beyond our control. We will deal more with adequacy later in the report.

We are also concerned that the inequity in funding between boards makes some boards less accountable than others. For example, two coterminous school boards have the same mill rate, but due to assessment wealth—commercial and industrial taxation—one of the boards is able to maintain a very low mill rate. This results in a mill rate shortage of financial resources to the assessment-poor board.

When parents, teachers, provincial legislators and other interest groups have the same expectations of both boards, can they both be truly accountable to these parties? Similarly, some provincial school boards have an unusually large assessment wealth and are able to provide programs and set provincial salary and working trends. These programs and trends are pointed to by parents, teachers, arbitrators, fact-finders, etc., as the norms to be followed in the province. These expectations place excessive financial hardship on many boards. It appears to us that some boards are less accountable than others.

Equity: The equity issue has long been debated and has been well researched and documented in many provincial reports over the years. Most recently, the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education report made many recommendations on this issue. We urge the select committee to recom-

mend to proceed with the recommendations in the Macdonald commission report relating to equity of financing and sharing of commercial and industrial taxation.

In May of this year, the provincial government announced a plan for the sharing of commercial and industrial taxation. We would urge the select committee to endorse the passage of this legislation when it is tabled. It is a step in the right direction towards a fair sharing of financial resources. All students in this province should have an equality of educational opportunity with an equity of tax burden on all taxpayers.

A frequently used argument against fair sharing that may have some validity states that most public school boards have a different student clientele than many separate school boards and that special programs and resources are required to meet these needs. In the first instance, if this is true it may also follow that the reverse is true and that many separate schools have many special needs as well.

If we assume that there is some validity to the first statement, it does not follow that maintaining the status quo is an equitable solution to this problem. The Ministry of Education has always had measures for dealing with unusual needs. These are called board-specific grants, formerly called grant weighting factors. If these grants need to be amended or if new ones need to be added, this would be the most equitable manner of handling these special needs. In this way, all school boards who have these special needs could share in these grants.

Again, in the matter of equity and fairness, we urge the select committee to support the legislation dealing with coterminous sharing of commercial and industrial taxation and other forms of nonresidential taxation and continue to implement the recommendation of the Macdonald commission on equity and sharing. Parents, teachers, trustees, provincial legislators and other interest groups have the same expectations of education, regardless of their location or their religious affiliation. We must maintain equity in order to meet these expectations and be properly accountable.

Adequacy: Along with the equity issue, our board is extremely concerned about the adequacy issue. Please consider the following chart of provincial transfer payments to education: 1984-85 to 1985-86, 4.8 per cent; 1985-86 to 1986-87, 9.3 per cent; 1986-87 to 1987-88, 4.7 per cent; 1987-88 to 1988-89, 8.4 per cent; 1988-89 to 1989-90, 8.3 per cent.

The above increases to education appear to be quite reasonable: two years approximately the inflation rate, while three years are well in excess of the inflation rate.

If we examine this more closely, a different trend may appear. Over this period, salary settlements have generally been in the five per cent range and the increment patterns have been in the 2.5 per cent range; therefore, annual basic operating costs of 75 per cent times five years equals 37.5 per cent. Other salary packages, benefit costs and supplies have seen similar increases. Therefore, just to meet our annual operating costs, 37.5 per cent was required, while 35.5 per cent was received.

However, all of the following initiatives have also taken place over these years or are in process:

- Extension of separate school funding to grades 11, 12 and OAC;

- Computer-assisted instruction;

- Decrease in class size to 20 to 1 in process;

- Increased capital allocations over the last three years, \$300 million per year;

- Large growth in pupil population across Ontario through immigration;

A myriad of legislation requiring implementation: health and safety, pay equity, affirmative action, race relations, etc; and

A myriad of educational programs and curricula requiring development and implementation.

All of these initiatives, when announced, were accompanied by promises of adequate financial support.

1630

It is our considered opinion that when you add the ongoing operating expenditures faced by school boards to the new initiatives and mandated programs, the provincial transfer payments fall short of meeting the costs faced by school boards. This development has forced school boards to obtain the shortfall in funds from the local taxpayer. This shifting of burden from provincial to local taxpayers creates a unique problem for assessment-poor boards, of which we are one of the poorest in the province.

In the attached appendix, we have provided an extract of our report entitled Report to the Ministry of Education on the 1989 Budget, 89-05-08. This report will provide significant insight into the financial situation at Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and demonstrates quite graphically the inadequacy of financial resources for our board. We also have other documentation available if you require any further insight.

We strongly urge the select committee to move to increase the grantable expenditure ceilings to an adequate level. The adequacy of expenditure ceilings and the rate of provincial support has become a severe crisis to many school boards.

We thank you for the opportunity to present to the select committee and hope you will find our report enlightening.

The Chairman: Thank you. Mr Johnston has a question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do. I managed to skim through some of the report to the ministry as you were reading, and I was quite shocked by the extent of your deficit situation. We have heard from at least two other Catholic boards about being in the same kind of circumstances.

I wonder if you could tell us a little about what steps you took to deal with what was possibly a cumulative deficit of more than \$2 million. How did you handle that, given the salary realities you mentioned in your comments and listed in your report to the ministry? Where did the cuts come?

Mr Donohue: Mr Ross, our director, will address that.

Mr Ross: Basically, if I could ask you to turn to appendix A, the report was sent to the minister in April requesting urgent financial help from the ministry. Under one of the most recent bills, he does have the power to give extra money to boards to offset unrealistic mill rate increases. If you would bear with me for about five minutes, I will show you what the poorest of the poor boards is really facing.

Under section 1 of the overview of the 1989 budget, we basically are stating that the 1989 grants have had a devastating effect on our board. In 1988, we finished the year at a deficit of \$532,000. This is a board that has no luxuries.

I sat there and listened to the other boards talk about the problems with capital; ours are only compounded. We have over 100 portables, a quarter of the students are in portables, and we simply have no money to build new schools.

We sent out a directive in the fall last year indicating that the 1988 budget would be flat-lined and rolled over into 1989. By doing so, our deficit would increase by another \$1.6 million on top of it, which would bring us to an overall deficit of \$2.2 million. We are also talking of a school system of only 8,000 students, a school system with no luxuries.

Our costs basically are entailed in staffing, benefits, supplies and services, such as pencils, papers and what you need to clean the schools, and our operating costs such as transportation

and tuition fees to the public board and capital debt.

Please flip through to page 6 in this section. Under teachers' salaries, we are facing, with just the grid increment plus the increment pattern of our teachers, a 7.8 per cent increase in salaries. Our settlement was at 5.6 per cent and 5.4 per cent for two years. Our teachers coming in—we are the second lowest in the province—now rate 26th from the bottom in the province. So our problem is not high teacher salaries; they are very low.

On page 7 we deal with our support staff salaries. We were certainly one of the most guilty parties in the province when it comes to pay equity legislation. Our support staff were some 23.8 per cent behind. With the pay equity legislation facing us, we had to increase our support staff salaries and phase them in from \$8 an hour to \$12 an hour, some 50 per cent increase. We do not have that money.

Under the next one, on page 8, one of the things that hit us hard was the 20 to 1 class size. We had no places to put these students. They are in portables that were given to us by the ministry. With the 20 to 1 class size, the money did not cover such things as the additional French teachers and additional music teachers. If you are going 20 to 1 in grades 1 and 2, how can you turn around to the kindergarten teachers in junior kindergarten and tell them you are going to stay at 25 to 1? That costs us an additional three teachers. That may not sound like much, but that is a lot of money to us.

On page 9, we decimated the school system again. We took out \$1.1 million. We have set a target to cut 40 teaching staff. We have taken out 27.5 so far. Our elementary and secondary pupil-teacher ratio has risen to one of the highest in Ontario. On page 10, for the same 8,000 students in Lambton county, the county board of education has some 80 more teachers than we do.

One of the things we have virtually no control over—perhaps I could ask you to flip through about three pages, to schedule H—is that our board has had, over the years, to match the mill rate with the county board. Certainly, under the new initiatives with the ministry regarding the funding, if you do not match the mill rate, there is no hope of gaining additional assessment base.

In our area, since we are housed beside a very wealthy county board, if you look at the city of Sarnia at the top, the elementary figure, the actual mill rate was cut by 0.4 per cent. We are virtually an elementary school system. If you go down the line about 10 points to Clearwater, it

increased by 1.6 per cent on the elementary base. That is 70 per cent of our tax base. So when we match mill rates, very little money is raised on the taxes.

On page 12, if you take a mill, what we call a Sarnia mill, across Lambton county, our residential mill rate will raise some \$224,000. The county boards raise \$1,349,000, which is six times as much. I believe that is the second-largest ratio, out of proportion, in the province. I think Kirkland Lake is the other one and it has twice as many pupils.

On page 13, basically what has happened in our area this year is that we have slashed the budgets to pieces. We have cut the staffs. The deficits are still increasing, and the biggest, frightening thing of all is that we have 10 collective agreements that are open for negotiations. We know the staffs are going to try to recoup the cuts and the losses, and there is simply no money there.

That has been our answer to the shortfall of money, Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was a short question, Mr Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman: But it was a very comprehensive answer.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A pretty overwhelming answer.

The Vice-Chairman: I would like to thank the Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board very much for the presentation and for taking the time to come before the committee today.

Our final presenters today are the Windsor Home and School Council. Perhaps we could ask you to come forward. Once again, we have set aside 30 minutes and we are going to have to adhere to that rule very strictly, as the cabs will be waiting in exactly 30 minutes at the front door. We would appreciate it if you would introduce yourselves and those with you, and we will try to keep our section of your presentation time as short as possible. Thank you for coming.

1640

WINDSOR HOME AND SCHOOL COUNCIL

Mrs Percy: How do you do, ladies and gentlemen. I am Jo Anne Percy, the president of the Windsor Home and School Council. This is Betty Turner, a past president of the home and school council, who is going to read our brief, and we will both answer questions.

Mrs Turner: We will make it fast.

The Windsor Home and School Council is composed of representatives of home and school associations in over a dozen elementary and secondary schools of the Windsor Board of Education. We are all taxpayers who support the Windsor Board of Education via property taxes that are paid directly by our mortgages or rents. In recent years, we have expanded our role beyond the old-fashioned tea and cookies image to sit on board committees that include the curriculum committee, the special education advisory committee, OPEN and the race relations advisory committee.

It should be noted that education should be considered an investment in the future citizens of Canada, not an outrageous, expensive luxury. There are facts available that show us that for every dollar spent on the education of a child, we save \$12 when they are adults. With this in mind, we trust that the province of Ontario will begin to fund education in increasing amounts instead of decreasing amounts and that the grants will be equitable for all.

In round figures, we have gone in less than 10 years from an education system funded 65 per cent by the province and 35 per cent by the local taxpayer, to 35 per cent by the province and 65 per cent by the local taxpayer, a complete reversal. It is a difficult situation to explain to the 72 per cent of the public school taxpayers in this city who do not have students in the school system.

With the implementation of Bill 82, many special needs students were placed under the education umbrella and the board found it was funding programs that previously received their funds via the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health. Yes, there were special implementation grants, but we all knew that sooner or later the funds would come directly from the local taxpayer.

Unfortunately, we have reached that position sooner rather than later. With full funding, we are now duplicating these services throughout most of the province. Before full funding, most of these special services were provided by public boards of education. Duplication of services does seem to be an unnecessary expense and lack of accountability to the average taxpayer.

We are very concerned that the provincial government issued a press release saying that it was decreasing the capital grants from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. It seems that a 15 per cent decrease in the dollars for such a significant item of education financing should have at least been discussed in the Legislature. Boards of education

organize their long-range programming with percentages in mind and then, oops, the rules of the game are changed.

The Windsor Board of Education has two very old, viable schools that need to be replaced. Dougall Avenue school had bricks falling off it from a very heavy rain this summer. Fortunately, no children were hurt. That school has been on the replacement list for years. Another school, King Edward, needs to be replaced. These buildings are deteriorating while we wait for appropriate funding and now the province's share has decreased by 15 per cent.

The general legislative grant for the funding of elementary pupils needs to be increased in light of all the programs that are now mandated for elementary pupils. This funding should reflect actual cost, not an outdated percentage that does not reflect today's programming requirements.

The Windsor Board of Education has shown its accountability by not indulging in deficit financing. The terms of full funding stated that funding of the separate system would not be done at the expense of the public system. We hope that the deficits incurred by our coterminous boards will not be written off by the public school supporters' tax dollars. It should be funded by the taxpayers of the coterminous board.

Windsor Home and School Council would like to express our thanks to the committee for coming to Windsor to give us the opportunity to comment on the funding of education in Ontario. We trust that you will consider our comments and concerns when you prepare your reply concerning the equity, accountability and adequacy of funding education in Ontario.

Mr Keyes: This is the first time we have seen the statistic from the many we have heard over the last two weeks, but you say that in the city of Windsor, 72 per cent of the public school taxpayers do not have students in the school system. It is very interesting and I have never heard that one used before, or that large. In your work, have you then looked, because of that factor, at such things as alternate methods of financing education?

I am not looking so much at the pooling of commercial-industrial assessment, but we have had a couple of occasions when it was suggested that it maybe should be based on income tax, accepting the principle basically that everyone is going to have to share in it, as did our forefathers. Have you thought of another way of getting away from property tax? I think it very commonly is raised. I assume many of those 72 per cent are seniors and they do get granted back, as a

property tax rebate, approximately \$600, which might be anywhere from all to the majority of it.

Mrs Turner: The funding of education is so complex that we have never indulged in trying to figure out how to do it differently. Maybe you should be aware that we spend most of our time explaining the local school situation and the local school board and how it operates. We are inundated with US media here and people want to know why, when the taxes go up, they do not have the opportunity to vote on them. We are coming at things from an entirely different perspective in that respect. We have three major networks plus other networks from Detroit spouting out US information and the problems they are having with their school system, and the CBC cuts made it so that we do not even have local news on television from Friday night to Monday night. So it is very hard to get the message across in this community.

Mr Keyes: I hope they do not make comparisons and think the system they are describing in the US is the one you have in Windsor.

Mrs Turner: They worry about it and when we see what happens there, we are very concerned. We do not want to get into that position.

The Vice-Chairman: Without generating a debate that would cause a delay, I should just, in answer to the one question about the reduction of 15 per cent, say that the intent of the government is to reduce the percentage of each individual project and therefore create more money for

more projects, and therefore spread the money around. The hope would be that the renovation dollars would increase. That clearly is the intent of that legislation.

Mrs O'Neill: I just want to make one final comment. I feel that the Windsor Board of Education is very fortunate. They have had both their teachers and parents support their position today and I do not think any other board in this province has had such overwhelming support from its community.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for taking the time to come and I am sorry that your brief may have been curtailed a little bit, but we do appreciate your comments and we will, as you have asked, take them into account.

Mr R. F. Johnston: All right, who is this chair?

The Vice-Chairman: Well, I kept getting notes saying—here is one that says, “We want Dianne back.” It says, “Here’s a quarter. Go out and make a phone call.” I thought I had better get this show back on target.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I may be wrong. We may be able to get a consensus out of this committee yet.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you for coming today. The select committee on education is adjourned until tomorrow morning at Queen’s Park at 10 o’clock.

The committee adjourned at 1649.

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Reddam, Ronald J., Director of Education

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Irwin, Helen

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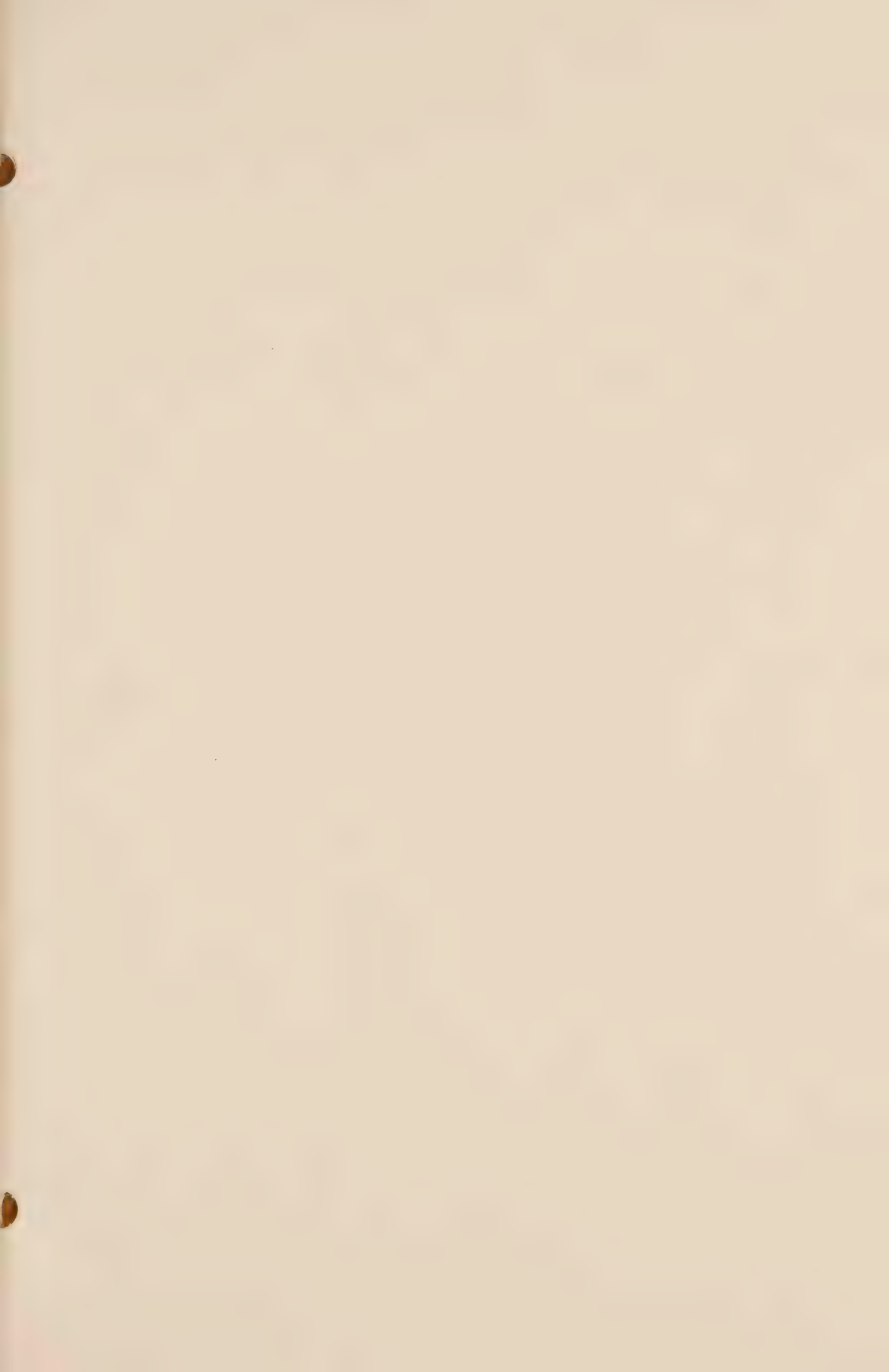
Donohue, William, Chairman

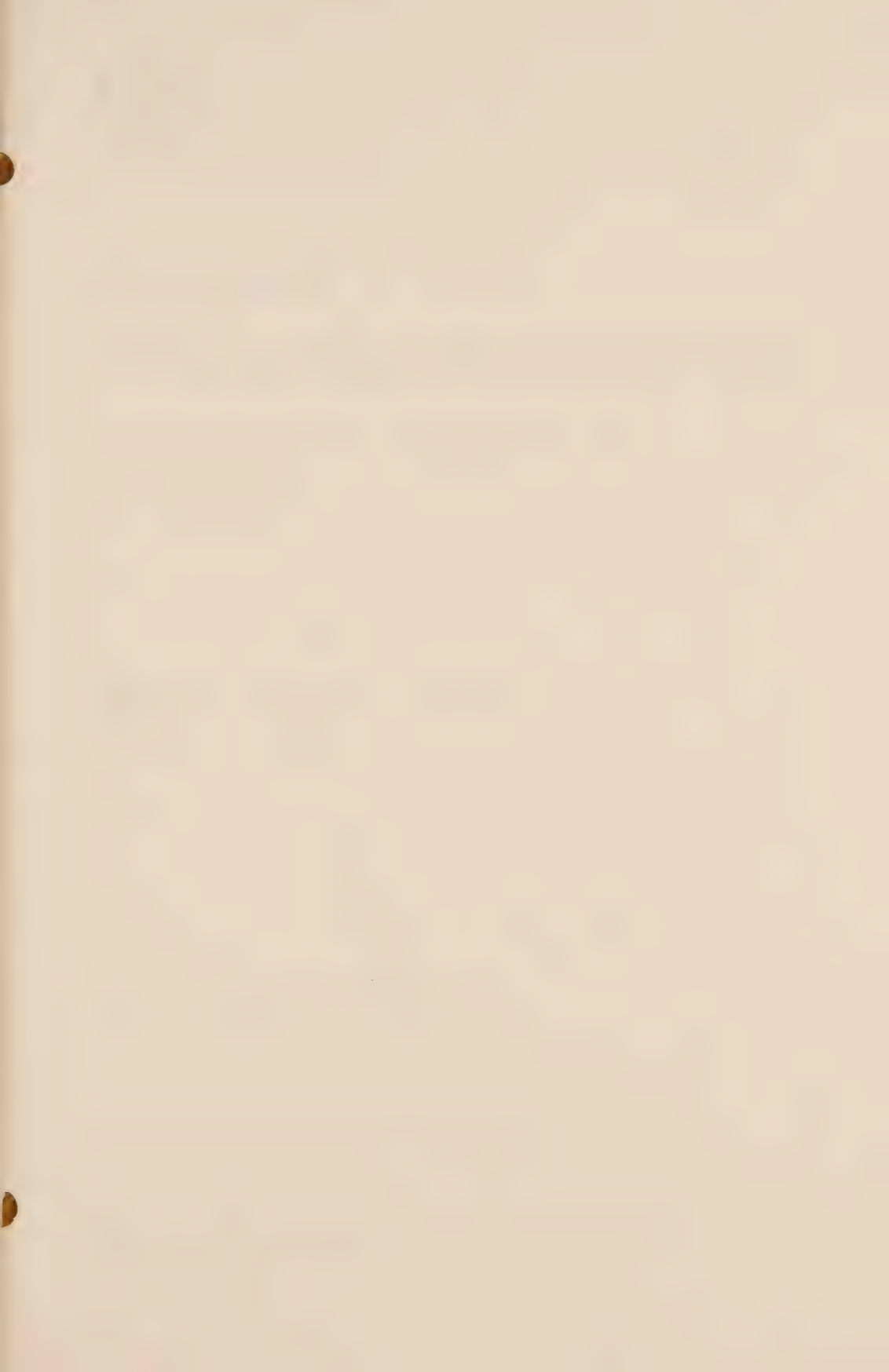
Ross, John R., Director of Education/Secretary

From the Windsor Home and School Council:

Percy, Jo Ann, President

Turner, E., Past President







Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 26 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 26 September 1989

The committee met at 1007 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning. I see a quorum and I would like to get started on this round of hearings for the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, particularly relating to the equity, adequacy and accountability of both operating and capital finances.

Just before we go to our first presenters this morning, Dr Gardner would like to talk to members briefly about summary 2.

Dr Gardner: We have two things for members this morning. The committee asked earlier about the Jackson Commission on Declining School Enrolment in Ontario report from 1978. We have given you a list of its recommendations. We have also given you the press clippings from the Kingston paper. The clippings from the other paper I will have this afternoon.

Second is our summary of the concerns and recommendations that the committee is hearing. This one is a lot fuller than the last one, of course; this is up until the end of last week. This is the first two full weeks. We have set it up in such a way that we hope will help members as they think about the report a bit as well in terms of the subject headings and the different categorizations we have used.

We will probably have another summary next Monday before going into committee writing, but this one is at least starting to flesh out the concerns and so on that we have heard a lot more fully than that first one we had after the first couple of days.

The Chairman: Thank you. Any questions before we go on to our presentations?

Mr Mahoney: I assume that each time you do a summary it is from the beginning of the hearings.

Dr Gardner: Yes, they are cumulative; they roll in the first few days as well.

Mrs O'Neill: Does Dr Gardner want to tell us about this other tome that came in?

Dr Gardner: Certainly not; that tome is not from me. The ministry may wish to speak to that.

Mrs O'Neill: Oh, my goodness.

Dr Gardner: We are only into shorter material.

The Chairman: Are you referring to this very massive binder?

Mrs O'Neill: Yes.

The Chairman: We are going to have a test tomorrow morning at 9:55; so please be well versed before then.

Mr Mahoney: Do you want my note now?

The Chairman: No excuses accepted.

Mr Mahoney: I am feeling sick already.

The Chairman: I think we will go to our first presentation this morning. I am pleased to welcome the York Region Board of Education.

YORK REGION BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Bowes: The introduction is the same as I have given to you several times before but, for any new members, we want to make sure that you do not mix up York region with North York, East York or the city of York. York region, of course, extends from Steeles Avenue north to Lake Simcoe; it is bounded on the east by the Durham region and on the west by the Peel region. It covers about 650 square miles, with a population in 1988 of about 409,000 and growing every day.

The Chairman: Before going any further, I guess I am half asleep this morning because I did not tell you that you should begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr Bowes: Yes. I will do that. I am only going to say a few words and then hand it over to the committee.

I am Harry Bowes, chairman of York Region Board of Education. On my immediate left is Paul Bennett, the chief author of the brief you have. Beside him is Bill Crothers, trustee, the associate author of this report. On my far left is Bob Cressman, director of education for the York Region Board of Education.

The Chairman: Please proceed whenever you are ready. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation.

Mr Bowes: We are gradually approaching an enrolment of approximately 62,000 students in

York region. We are growing at about 3,000 to 4,000 a year. I think last year we increased by 3,900 students. We presently have 107 schools in operation and we are expected to add one secondary and five elementary schools every year. We have 656-plus portables on site at the present time. Including part-time help and supply teachers, we have approximately 700 staff. Of our 62,000 students, about 50 per cent are bused daily. We do not offer junior kindergarten, but we will be introducing it very shortly, as you know.

Having introduced you to a brief outline of what the York region board is all about, I would like to pass it over to Paul Bennett, who will make the presentation on behalf of our board.

Mr Bennett: Good morning. I am pleased to see you bright and early in the morning. We welcome the opportunity you have given us to present our ideas on education finance to your committee.

Over the past 10 months our board's special committee on provincial funding has been particularly active in promoting the introduction of lot levies for school purposes. We have made representations to the Minister of Education, the Treasurer, the Premier and the interministerial committee of parliamentary assistants. Late last month we appeared before the standing committee on finance and economic affairs in support of Bill 20 and particularly part III relating to education development charges.

As one of eight high-growth boards bordering Metropolitan Toronto, we strongly support education lot levies and urge the government to proceed with that legislation as soon as possible. However, we have not come here this morning to discuss education lot levies.

In recent weeks, our attention has focused on the Ontario government's plan for coterminous sharing of commercial and industrial assessment. Since the Minister of Education's announcement back on 18 May 1989, we have examined the provincial government's plan of compensating grants, carefully dissected the ministry's 1988 impact study and assessed the revenue impact on our board. The results of that investigation appear in the York region brief with the red binding and entitled Brief on Coterminous Pooling.

Our chairman has outlined a little of the background situating York region and our location and mentioned that we face a tremendous problem of growth. I will refer to that later in the presentation.

In his May 1989 statement on the sharing of local education revenues, the Honourable Chris Ward, Minister of Education at the time, assured us that the plan for coterminous sharing would not adversely affect public boards or the public system.

Following on the heels of the Ontario government's extension of full funding to separate schools, public education supporters in York region might be excused for questioning the minister's commitment to a strong public education system.

Anxieties were also aroused when it was revealed that the shift to coterminous sharing will cost Ontario public boards some \$200 million over the six-year phase-in period, yet the 1989 Ontario budget earmarked only \$180 million for this purpose, a shortfall of at least \$20 million over the next six years.

How will coterminous sharing affect the York Region Board of Education? Part II of our brief, pages 9 to 20, attempts to address this question, but because you are overwhelmed with weighty tomes and I know that educational finance is a difficult subject, having wrestled with it for part of the summer, I will try to lead you through our document.

Changes in Ontario government policy concerning the sharing of commercial and industrial assessment have great potential for harming the long-term financial viability of our board.

As provincial support for education has declined since 1975, York region and other boards have come to rely more and more heavily on local property taxes, including revenues from commercial and industrial assessment.

In 1988, for example, the York region board relied upon local tax sources for 74 per cent of its budget expenditures of \$272.8 million. Of the \$201.9 million that came from local tax revenues, approximately \$67 million, or 33 per cent, came from commercial and industrial assessment.

An analysis of York region assessment growth from 1987 to 1989 indicates that commercial and industrial assessment provides an important, stable and growing source of revenues. Any erosion of that assessment base without full provincial grant compensation would seriously impair our financial abilities and hurt our long-term financial viability as a board.

The 1988 impact study supplied to the boards by the Ministry of Education purports to show how public boards will be compensated for any losses through something called "an additional

provincial grant." But the exact nature of this grant is not made clear.

From the Minister of Education's policy statement and the briefing notes, one would assume that the additional funds will be added to the funding base each year so that in the sixth year, 1995, the base will be \$180 million higher than if the grants had not been made to affected boards.

From the 1988 impact study, however, one can draw quite another conclusion. The table and supporting data suggest that the provincial commitment is only for \$180 million, total actual dollars, of which some \$30 million is to be expended each year as a one-year grant. Thus the annual grant in 1995 would be the same as in year one. This is what our analysis indicates, that the second scenario is more likely.

These are two dramatically different interpretations of the provincial grant commitment, each with vastly different consequences for the York Region Board of Education and for other boards affected. We trust that the first grant commitment is the one intended by the province. Should that not be the case, York region and other public boards will be burned by the coterminous sharing plan. I would describe it as a slow burn over a period of time, slowly eroding our abilities to finance our operations.

A closer analysis of the projected impact on the York region public board reveals that what you see is not what you get. The ministry impact study forecasts that the York region public board would suffer a loss of \$3.1 million in tax revenues over six years but receive an additional provincial grant of \$5 million, thus a net gain of \$1.9 million.

Our calculations suggest that, on the contrary, the proposed provincial compensating grant scheme will be inadequate to cover our lost revenues. The ministry assumed that York region's grant rate would remain constant at the 1988 level when in fact our rate is declining and may reach zero by 1995.

Because the rate of increase in assessment in York region exceeds the increase in enrolment, we also stand to lose revenues. In 1988, for example, the rate of commercial and industrial assessment growth was 16.3 per cent.

Even assuming a 10 per cent increase in commercial and industrial assessment per year over the phase-in period, the shift in revenues to our sister board by 1995 will be much higher than forecast and exceed the projected additional provincial grant by, we estimate, at least \$1 million in that year, 1995.

The proposed additional provincial grant appears to be a fixed amount based upon current dollars rather than upon 1989 dollars inflated, yet the commercial and industrial assessment in York region is not only growing, but the mill rate is also subject to inflation.

Even assuming no increase in assessment, 1995 mill rates, and thus revenues, are likely to be double those of 1988. Thus the projected loss in tax revenues will be significantly higher in 1995 dollars than in 1989 dollars.

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If current trends in funding continue, our board will be at a zero grant position by 1995. Subsequent to that we will be significantly negatively affected, much as the Metropolitan Toronto public boards are today.

The impact on York region public school supporters will be equivalent to a five per cent increase in mill rates unless continuing, ongoing assistance is provided. I should point out that we had a 16.7 per cent increase in taxes in this particular year, so that would be a crushing blow to taxpayers in York region.

Let me turn to the implications and some of the recommendations and try to lead you through some of the key things there.

We view the plan for coterminous sharing with considerable trepidation, as you may have gathered. Since the province is clearly committed to coterminous sharing, simply restating our long-standing opposition to pooling between public and separate boards would serve little purpose here.

We recognize that the policy landscape has changed in Ontario, yet we do have some major concerns about the adequacy of this provincial compensatory grant scheme that has been put before us. Our brief suggests, in fact, that the York region board could suffer an actual loss in revenues of many millions of dollars unless adjustments are made to this plan. We urge you to rethink this and to look at the plan that has been put forward.

High-growth boards like ours will certainly require additional provincial assistance to cope with our growth-related costs. Currently we devote up to 15 per cent of our operating budget—that is not capital; we are talking about operating—to such costs. Education lot levies are going to help us in providing new schools and new pupil places, but other adjustments to grant criteria are needed to defray related revenues and costs.

Our capacity to finance this growth is quite limited. We are suffering, and there will be

implications for our program and operations. To remove a further portion of our assessment from York region and other boards, even if it is fair and equitable to the two systems, imposes an additional burden on our already financially squeezed high-growth boards.

Based upon our analysis of the impact of coterminous pooling, we would like to make several key recommendations. I refer to the brief, pages 22 to 24 where there is, in more detail, a more extensive outline.

Simply stated, should the Ontario government proceed with coterminous sharing, we strongly urge the province to provide the following:

1. The payment of full and complete compensation in the form of additional provincial grants to the York region board and other boards incurring a loss in revenues as a result of the changes;

2. A commitment from the ministry to recognize and adequately compensate public boards for the negative impact on inflation, growth and enrolments of changes in these tax revenues and to build into the formula adequate protection from these factors in producing the additional provincial grants;

3. A further commitment to extend the payment of compensation in the form of additional provincial grants beyond the six-year phase-in period to cushion our board and other boards against a dramatic shift in the local tax burden after 1995.

Finally, and perhaps most important, we urge the province and the select committee to address the looming financial crisis facing all high-growth boards. I include public as well as separate in this.

Existing general legislative grants are simply inadequate to meet our growth-related costs. We would urge you to assess the extraordinary costs outside the regular grant system borne by our board and other boards, and to consider adjustments to the existing grant formula recognizing a variety of growth-related operating costs. In the question period, we would be pleased to itemize some of those growth-related costs. Unless these changes are made, the plan for coterminous sharing will only perpetuate existing inequities in the provincial grant system.

We thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to your questions.

The Chairman: You have certainly provided us with the most careful and extensive analysis to date of the commercial-industrial pooling and what effect this will have on your particular region. We very much appreciate that.

Mr Furlong: Your offer to itemize the growth-related costs: I would like you to itemize them in this sense. Could you identify what the components are that go into the above-ceiling expenditures? I would like it not in a general sense but more in the sense of: Is it because you are locked in to collective agreements, the negotiations being higher than what the grants are? Is that the major component, or is it other programs you are called upon to perform and funds do not come to you?

Mr Bennett: I would like to refer that to the gentleman to my left who is better apprised of that than I am.

Mr Cressman: If you are referencing ordinary costs or ordinary expenditures, then it is a combination of what you reference. If you are talking about the issue of programs additional to the board's initiatives, often placed on its shoulders by the provincial government in addition to those it has chosen as necessary for the residents and inhabitants of the region, then most certainly you are talking about the effects of collective bargaining, reduced class sizes, demand for higher wages because of cost increases in housing, and so on.

In York region, as you know, the price to live there has virtually doubled in the past three years in terms of any housing you might purchase, so that any expectation that we might be able to live as a board within the current ordinary ceilings is not real. It will not happen in York region. In fact, it will not happen in many places in Ontario unless those ceilings are significantly raised.

If you are referencing extraordinary costs, which is part of the 15 per cent that Paul Bennett referenced a moment ago, then you are talking about some pretty significant increases experienced recently, the first of which I would cite for you being the issue of land.

We used to be able to buy an eight-acre elementary school site for a very reasonable price of \$500,000 or \$600,000. Now, we are being asked by developers for \$700,000 and \$800,000 an acre for that same school site, so the price has gone up tenfold in the last two years in terms of their demands.

On top of that, with all of the booming industry that is going on in the greater Toronto area, you are looking at a cost per square foot of \$100 plus for almost any elementary school that you might build. We have been up as high, after cutting it back \$10 a square foot, as \$117 or \$118 for a secondary. When you put up a 130,000-square-foot building, that means, with land prices today that are being expected, a secondary school for

1,400 or 1,500 kids is somewhere close to \$30 million. It gets pretty expensive.

Those, in terms of the growth expenditures, both ordinary and extraordinary, are a few short answers for you. I could go on but I am sure you have other questions you would like to explore.

Mr Furlong: I would just like to explore one other. One of the things we are looking at is equity. You are obviously not in favour of pooling at all unless there is some guarantee that you are not going to lose anything in the long run. We talk about assessment-poor boards and assessment-rich boards. Assessment-poor boards tell us that we should be sharing commercial and industrial assessment on a province-wide basis, and I would like you to comment on that.

Mr Bennett: Can I address that one directly? You may have noticed throughout the brief that we talk in terms of the issue of coterminous pooling as one that our board has had a long-standing position in opposition to. However, if one looks at the alternatives that were available at the time of a change in educational finance, this is the least damaging of the alternatives in terms of pooling. So we are in fact recognizing that times have changed and we are into a system which amounts to two publicly funded systems, and therefore it is not unexpected that you would have a change in the basis of educational finance.

The inference in your question was that we are here to oppose pooling outright. I think the thrust of our brief is that if this is the plan for coterminous sharing, then we would like to be assured that there will be adequate compensation to our board in the form of additional provincial grants. We are quite prepared to go along with it, I think, at this point. We do not see you turning back the clock and going back to maybe a simpler time when those issues could be resolved in that way.

I really think the issue is now advanced to the point where we should be looking at how we adequately compensate those boards that will be affected. We are not happy with the proposals that have been put before us and we came here to try to improve those.

1030

The Chairman: We have seven or eight minutes left.

Mr Mahoney: On the capital issue and everything surrounding the lot levy plan, first of all, you require about seven acres for an

elementary and 15 acres for a high school. Is that correct?

Mr Cressman: Three hectares and seven, yes, which brings you to somewhere close to eight and 18.

Mr Mahoney: That is even greater. If you are talking about \$600,000 or \$700,000 an acre, have you looked at any possible changes to the amount of land and the style of building, perhaps two- or three-storey buildings instead of one-storey? Can you comment on that?

Mr Cressman: Yes, we have. We are building three-storey elementary schools right now, which is something that has not happened in this province in many years, as you know. If you want to go back, the 1950s, I think, is the last time you saw that sort of construction going on.

That has been prompted by a couple of factors, including the fact that land is so expensive. But in addition to that, some of York region is pretty hilly and pretty rolling and sometimes it is pretty hard to get a flat school site in some of our communities, believe it or not. Therefore, we have had to build into the side of the hill with three storeys in some instances to best accommodate a site, after a long hassle with developers and negotiations over which piece they are going to give up, because of course they want to keep the best for housing sales and give us the least desirable. That is something that I suppose if I were a developer I would do too.

The other aspect of it is that with the addition of provincial initiatives like child day care into our schools, where we have to provide separate unloading zones and separate play areas and part of our land to accommodate its building and playground, we need more land. Rather than again increase school sites that much larger, we have tried to compensate by changing building designs.

In addition, we are never able to build schools fast enough to keep up with the growth. It is not at all unusual for us to have a school open in September 1989, for example, and by next September there will be a dozen portables on that site. So we have to have sites big enough to accommodate portables because the next school is not ready and this school has to hold the kids until the next school is.

These are three reasons why we are very reluctant to reduce our yardage or the size of our schoolyards, but we are doing what you have suggested in looking at different designs.

Mr Mahoney: Have you looked at sharing land with the municipality?

Mr Cressman: Yes.

Mr Mahoney: Have you any of those agreements in place?

Mr Cressman: Yes, we have any number of school sites that are adjacent to parks, and in that instance we have in some cases reduced the size of the school site in order to use the park as part playground. That has other legal implications and we have lawsuits on our hands right now because we do not control that land. We sometimes run into a problem of something happening on that property, wherein equipment may have been defective. We could not get it fixed or changed because we do not own and control it and we ended up with a lawsuit because a child got hurt. So there are complications to those arrangements.

Mr Bennett: Could I add something? I think your question touched on the escalating cost for land acquisition. That is a major concern that we have and is one of the things we are going to be looking at. Our board has taken no really formal position on that as yet, but that is certainly the greatest concern and our director referred to that earlier on. The costs of site acquisition are going through the roof, and that is our primary concern. Any savings we might make through slight reductions in the size and so on certainly have to be looked at. I really think that is an issue that is coming to the fore now.

Mr Mahoney: Traditionally, school boards have been, at least in my part of the world in Peel, opposed to any attempt to designate school sites as public space that would in essence take away the value of that particular school site. Yet it seems to me, with costs being what they are, that there is some validity for that if you are going to designate a park and take a certain percentage of the land in your secondary plan process for park purposes, etc; that you should be doing it for schools and more or less sterilize the effect of the value. Have you analysed that as a board and does that cause you a lot of concern? I am interested in that.

Mr Bennett: Let me react to that. I think our board has been very active in promoting educational lot levies. Bill 20 and the Development Charges Act is something that we focused a lot of attention on because we felt that was critically important to meeting our growth-related costs for new school construction. I think that this recent thing with the escalation in land prices for site acquisitions has come along in with that and we are now directing our attention to it. But I think it would be premature for us to say it at this time.

We would like to discuss it among ourselves and as a committee, our committee on provincial funding. We will be meeting in the next few weeks and looking at that issue.

But certainly, I think, school boards' attitudes are bound to change given the fact that, you know, all of the revenues we have are being eaten up for land acquisition costs. It may in fact unravel all the good effects of, say, the lot levy legislation if we have to put it into land acquisition.

Mr Mahoney: I have just one very quick question. Have you analysed over the last five years how your capital program would be if you had had lot levies?

Mr Bennett: I think there is no question that the York Region Board of Education since 1975, I believe, has been advocating educational lot levies. We have already financed a tremendous amount of growth on our own without the advantage of school lot levies. I think it is clear that it would have made a dramatic difference.

I will relate it to my own particular situation. In my ward in Thornhill, there is a whole area that is unserved by a local elementary school and we are busing kids all over the place. They had just short of the required number of students. I am sure that if lot levies had been in place that a school would have serviced that community.

If you look at our brief too, you might wonder why we have such high busing costs. We are essentially an urban and rural, but mostly urban, school board. Why do we have such a high proportion of our kids bused, 50 per cent? This is related to the growth problem. We have coped with the growth problem in the only way we could, which was adding portables on to existing school sites and busing. So what you get is a dramatic number of portables. Actually, I think we have 672 portables on site now, and 12 more just appeared since we did the brief. It is just astronomical. Also, we do a tremendous amount of busing in urban areas. This is not rural area busing we are talking about.

Mr Crothers: This also speaks to the 10 or 15 per cent costs that we absorb as a board related to growth, which means one of two things. One is that our mill rate has to be higher to produce additional revenues to cover those related costs, the busing costs, the portable costs, the school site costs, the building of new schools, the associated costs of opening a new school which are not covered by grants, the furniture costs over and above the grant system, and in our board it is 10 or 15 per cent. That is 10 or 15 per cent of revenues that we do not have that nongrowth

boards have to put into programming. We are faced with a choice. Either we have lower programming costs or else we have higher mill rate costs. It is a combination of the two.

Mr Mahoney: I would just be interested if they could perhaps for the committee take the time to look at the last five years of—

Mr Cressman: I can give you a number. If you were to take the statement that was made about one high school and five elementary schools, which is very accurate in terms of projecting physical plant needs, that is a \$60 million project. The grant rate is about one third at the moment on the before-lot-levy-implementation plan, which means that the local taxpayers are putting out \$40 million.

If lot levies picked up even half of that, you would cut the \$40 million in half and save the local taxpayers \$20 million a year. If lot levies picked up more than half, then you would save more to the local taxpayers. As we understand the proposed legislation, the potential would be there to pick up far more than half, which means that potentially you might save them \$30 million of the \$40 million. It is a significant issue.

1040

Mrs O'Neill: I have two specific questions. On the bottom of page 16 you are suggesting a five per cent increase in the mill rate. Is that an annual increase and is that over the next six years, or what is that figure?

Mr Crothers: That figure is related primarily to the period after the 1995 period if we do not get additional costs. We are not suggesting that it will be an additional five per cent each year compounded, but it will be almost equivalent to a one-shot five per cent increase. But that is specifically related only to the impact after 1995. There will be a lot more than that if you build in the other five factors we were talking about in the brief.

Mrs O'Neill: You have talked about a lot of growth-related costs. Most of them I would not classify as operating costs. One operating cost I would like to ask you about is the child care component. I am just wondering how you are administering that in your board because you must be one of the boards that has picked up the most on that particular initiative of our government. Could you tell me a little bit about that and any costs related to that initiative from the educational point of view?

Mr Cressman: Initially, we were of the impression that child care would not cost us anything for the ongoing operation. That how-

ever was soon proved not to be the case. We have been forced into hiring a co-ordinator of child care, someone who works with the operators, operates within board criteria to make selections, provides some supervision and that sort of thing, ensures that they are properly licensed and all the things that have to go on. In addition to that, there is a hidden cost.

Mrs O'Neill: What kind of salary do you attach to a job like that?

Mr Cressman: I think she is about a \$40,000 employee. That would be a pretty close guess.

In addition to that, of course, there are hidden costs inasmuch as the principals are being astute. If I were the principal of a school and there were a child care centre in my school and something went wrong there, I know full well that it is not the child care centre that is going to get the black eye. It is going to be the name of my school that gets it. So I am going to be very cautious and ensure that I am aware of what is going on, that there is in fact proper supervision, that there is in fact good programming and so on because, while it is not my child care centre, it is in my building and I am the one who is going to be identified.

So they tell me they are having to spend some time. That is a hidden cost and indirect inasmuch as they are paid to do the job anyway, but it takes them away from other duties. In terms of the direct costs, it amounts to the work the committees are doing in setting it up in the salary of this one individual at this point in time, because we bill the operators for the heat, light and custodial services.

Mrs O'Neill: How many do you have?

Mr Cressman: At the moment we have something like 12 or 13. It changes regularly so I do not have a count I can give you precisely, but it is that range.

The Chairman: That is it?

Mrs O'Neill: I knew we were short of time and we do not want to miss out on giving each person due time.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the York Region Board of Education on behalf of our committee for your contribution today.

Mr Bennett: We appreciate your time and, hopefully, we will be back in about six months to select committee number four.

The Chairman: We look forward to hearing from you then.

Our next presenter will also be from York region: the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Please be seated. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time.

Although we try to keep to that time limit, sometimes it does vary a slight bit, so we apologize for the fact that we are already 15 minutes behind. Please begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, and then you may begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

YORK REGION ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Virgilio: I am Joseph Virgilio. I am the chairman of the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Frank Bobesich, on my immediate left, is the director of education, and on my far left is John Sabo, who is the superintendent of business and finance.

We are here this morning to outline some of our concerns. The board has, on numerous other occasions, outlined these concerns to the Premier and to the Minister of Education through briefs and letters about what we feel is the totally inadequate and inequitable level of educational funding available to the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

The concerns facing the financing of our board include the provisions of accommodation, the resulting debt burden and the lack of financial support for growth boards and, second, the inequitable and grossly unfair assessment base. In particular, this year our problems have been aggravated by the disappointing 1989 general legislative grants which were received. Since our board is a grant-reliant board—ie, assessment-poor—we were significantly and severely affected, and as a result of this forced to make major expenditure reductions. Those boards which are not grant-reliant were not forced to make similar adjustments.

Our 1989 budget was over \$172 million. An average tax increase was inflicted on our ratepayers of 18.5 per cent. Included in that tax increase or in that budget was a projected underlevy of \$3.2 million, and this after major expenditure reductions, the maintaining of 1988 levels of funding for most budget areas, a deferral of appointment of much needed support staff and education program expansions, the use of our remaining reserves of \$1.3 million and the debenturing of major capital expenditures of \$2.3 million. We debentured our capital projects.

Had we not done the debenturing of this \$2.3 million and used the reserve funds, the tax increase would have been close to 24 per cent in order for us to balance the budget. The board felt that such an increase was both immoral and

caused by factors outside the control of the board, specifically inadequate funding, the limited assessment base and the excessive debt charges that we have incurred over the years.

As an example, though, the tax increase of our coterminous public board, which was just here, was 16.5 per cent. However, in talking to them, they have advised that they still have a plentiful supply of reserves.

The board now has to explain to our ratepayers—and I can tell you that I have had many concerns from our ratepayers—why their tax bill has increased. A lot of them are saying that they, first, will have to leave the separate system because of the increase and, second: “How are we going to stay in our houses paying these high taxes?”

Our brief today is intended to highlight for the committee our concerns and comments related to equity, accountability and adequacy of educational financing in Ontario. It is hoped that we will be able to persuade the committee that the funding presently available to finance elementary and secondary education in Ontario is both inadequate and inequitable. We further hope to speak about the specific financial difficulties being faced by our board, which are a direct result of being assessment-poor. We also wish to comment on our difficulties in attempting to cope with the added costs associated with high growth.

I would like to have Mr Bobesich continue from this point.

Mr Bobesich: As indicated by Mr Virgilio, we hope to illustrate concretely, by way of exhibit and actual data, some of our current funding and financial difficulties in York region. Three major areas that we will deal with, to get to the point, have to do with the high growth of York region, the problems related to capital funding, and the difficulty of operating the system with the current level of operating grants.

1050

To begin with, and I am sure you have heard this in the past, both from our colleagues who just preceded us as well as in the context of other committee hearings related to lot levy legislation, York region is undoubtedly a high-growth area. The York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board is the fastest-growing school board in North America, and that is a dubious distinction. I mean, that has its pluses and minuses.

You have the text before you. I would just like to highlight a couple of things. You have the statistics that show what the overall population

has done in the past four or five years, and you can clearly see that by the year 2000 we are expecting a population of 800,000 people.

By way of impact on the school system, we have an appendix and a graph that shows our incremental growth on a yearly basis, past and projected into the future. By way of an example, last year our population went up by 15 per cent, which represents almost 4,200 youngsters, which really is a larger population base than the total population of approximately one third of the school boards in Ontario. We cope with a yearly increase of student body in excess of the stable student body of some one third of the school boards in the province.

This current year we went up likewise in the thousands and had to hire approximately 420 new teachers. Of the 420 new teachers, about 175 were beginning teachers. They are called rookie teachers. Let's just illustrate some of the challenges of managing a growth school system.

This explosive growth factor has really strained the board to the point where these hearings are crucial to us, as were the hearings on lot levy legislation. We need to access lot levies to assist us with our capital funding problems, and we need to appeal to you for reform within the context of educational financing, simply to be able to offer the kind of service and programs that are expected for our kids and by our ratepayers.

I refer you to page 6 of the text. As you know, each year a school board is expected to do a projection of enrolment in preparation for the budget. Because we are such a highly grant-reliant board, those projections are very important to us, and any variance in those projections, especially a lower yield than anticipated, has a negative impact on us, so we are very careful in those projections. This year, for example, we are under projection slightly and we are worried about the financial impact of that in terms of loss of projected revenue.

Another concern we face with respect to enrolment is the present method of counting for grant purposes only those pupils who are registered at three points during the year. So we are looking at our 30 September enrolment figures, of course. But for various factors, the growth industry has slowed down in York region this past six or seven months and some of the houses are not closing and some of the subdivisions are not closing. We have gone on projections generated last spring and last year and of course have hired staff in anticipation of those enrolments. The houses are not closing, we are a little short of the mark, but we know that

over the next two or three months those youngsters are going to appear. Yet our benchmark is 30 September, and we do not pick up another makeup point until January, and then we pick it up again in April.

The long and short of that story is that a school system like ours, which adds portables monthly and receives incoming youngsters into our jurisdiction monthly, is really penalized by not being able to claim those increases on a monthly basis rather than being stuck at a three-point-per-year grant calculation.

Another disparity should be noted. Those boards that are in a declining position are given some kind of supplementary assistance to respond to that, yet boards in a growth position are not given any kind of supplementary assistance and indeed are penalized by virtue of the three points of enrolment statistics.

The financing of accommodation: I am sure by now all of you have heard that in York region we have accommodation problems. I should like to draw your attention to page 8. The essential message of the text contained on pages 6, 7 and 8 really has to do with the kind of debt we are incurring as a result of trying to respond to creating and building new schools. If you look at that little chart, in 1984 this board was carrying a debenture and interest cost of some \$3 million. Currently we are carrying an interest cost of \$10.3 million. If you look at that in a longer-term perspective, the longer-term debt position is scaring us, with something like \$60.4 million. The increases, which I think you will find alarming, are 203 per cent in terms of the debt charge and 283 per cent in terms of the longer-term debt position. Of the average 18.5 per cent tax increase that we recently levied on our local taxpayer, six per cent was a direct result of a one-year increase in our annual debenture and interest carrying costs.

To further put that one into perspective, the magnitude of the debentures and interest carrying costs facing the board, the \$10.3 million of the current cost, represents in excess of 15 per cent of the 1989 total local tax requisition, which was \$68 million. When I talk to my staff I really do not use those figures; what I say to them is that for every dollar we raise from our local ratepayers in York region, 15 cents goes towards the debt charge, leaving us 85 cents for instructional purposes in a pure fashion.

Later on, you will see that because of the same difficulties we are having with transportation as the York Region Board of Education, we are picking up another overdraft in transportation

which is taking another five cents on the dollar from the local ratepayer. We are really operating with 80 cents for each dollar that we collect; 15 cents is going towards capital debt and five cents is going towards transportation.

If I can move on to page 9, based on the board's projected need for accommodation and the ministry's present method of funding, the board's debenture debt will continue to grow at an alarming rate. This will inevitably result in significant tax increases being levied on our local ratepayers and a greater share of the local tax dollar being spent covering debt instead of education.

If we use the board's October 1988 capital expenditure forecast and project the Ministry of Education's grant support based on the announced reduction in grant funding, the local share of the estimated \$400 million would exceed \$157 million. That is illustrated in a brief graph on page 9 of the English elementary, English secondary and French schools. We just cannot face that kind of local share. In raising our rates this year by 18.5 per cent, Mr Virgilio alluded to the hue and cry that came forth. There is a point that the ratepayer will simply not withstand any more.

Yet the difficult situation is that these folks have moved into lovely York region, and I say that positively. There is all kinds of beautiful real estate there, they paid a lot of money for their property and they are rather sophisticated, educated and want the very best for their kids. It is not only a question of maintaining a minimal level of service or programs; there are high expectations to increase the level of service and programming in the area.

The other curse is not just living in York region but being part of the greater Toronto area. Being an assessment-poor board is a problem unto itself, of course; being an assessment-poor board in the greater Toronto area, where you are competing against assessment-rich boards, compounds the problem, because parents network. Obviously, they network very well.

The local share above would translate, at the current long-term interest terms over a 15-year-period, to an annual debenture payment of approximately \$22 million. This is simply staggering and we know we are not going to be able to pull that off with our ratepayers.

The second major area of concern—the first theme I presented there had to do with growth—is capital funding and certainly the funding shortfall. Please focus for a moment on that chart. In 1984 we had an enrolment of 17,000 youngsters

in our school system housed in 40 schools with 123 portables. Today we have approximately 36,500 kids housed in 59 schools with 368 portables. Our shortfall in schools right now, never mind in money, is something like eight elementary schools and two secondary schools, just to pick up on the backlog.

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Of course you can see the disturbing trend there. While the enrolment has increased substantially, our ability to respond with added facilities has been limited. As an aside, I should highlight for you that the 368 portables approximates 11,000 students, which is about one third of our student population. So one third of the kids in York region take their education in portables. I think the disappointing part for many youngsters and many families is that some of these kids spend more than two or three years in those portables because of the way the organizational structure of the school goes.

We of course undertake to file a capital forecast with the ministry each year in October. This past year, we filed a substantial request and disappointingly received just a small portion of that request. There has always been a differential between what is asked for and what is received. Of the \$128 million we asked for in the current forecast, only \$78 million was received. That represents a financial shortfall of \$50 million. To complicate that problem, that allocation has been spread out over a three-year period. If we want to accelerate the projects, of course, we have to fund those projects ourselves. Even in the context of those schools that are approved and where construction gets under way, we have to wait for our draw on that capital, so we are putting out money to pay the contractor while we are waiting for our payback.

We have some difficulty with the ministry's current level of approved costs versus actual costs. There is a discrepancy between their approved costs and the reality of construction that exists today.

We can move to interest carrying costs. Our board, like most, must fund the differential between actual costs and the grant received through the issuance of long-term debentures. As a result, we are faced with the challenge of assessing long-term financing in an ever-volatile marketplace. We personally are pleased with the government's proposal for accessing government financing vehicles, which are aimed at reducing school board borrowing costs.

The other point I wish to draw here is that the lag time between expenditures made and grants

received must be covered by interim financing, and that is posing a problem for us. In recent years, allocation announcements have included funding spread over multiple years, further prolonging that problem, as I mentioned.

Close to one half of the allocations we received in our 1989 allocations response will not be eligible for grant assistance until 1990 and 1991. No special grant assistance is available to offset interest carrying costs or debenture charges.

Now our concern with reduction in grant funding level: With the pending lot levy legislation, we were glad to think that some relief was going to come. But of course, what we had hoped would not happen was the announcement from the Ministry of Education that its portion of grant funding would be reduced immediately, so that instead of playing with the 75-25, we are now playing with the 60-40 ratio. That 60-40 ratio is hurting us, especially in this interim hiatus period until this lot levy legislation is finally resolved. Suffice to say—on page 14—we are eagerly awaiting resolution and legislation of the lot levy.

A comment on our ability to pay: We truly hope that you will give some attention to the appendices in this document, which do concretely illustrate and substantiate some of our more emotional statements. The financing of capital projects and the impact on local operating budgets varies dramatically among boards. Appendix C presents selected 1988 audited financial information from all boards, both public and separate. Of the 10 boards we have listed, our board with 28,000 pupils has the third highest net long-term liability, with the Peel Board of Education and the Metropolitan Toronto board being first and second respectively.

However, on a per-pupil basis, there is no comparison. How can we in York region compete against assessment-rich giants like Peel and Metro? Quite frankly, the inequitable and sad state of affairs is that those boards with the least ability to pay must pay the most.

The Chairman: I just want to bring to your attention that you are somewhat over halfway through the brief and 20 minutes into your presentation time. I know you have many major concerns here, but you might like to précis part of the rest of the brief. We also have a number of members who have asked for questions.

Mr Bobesich: We have dealt with the growth and with some concerns in the area of capital funding. The last major section, which we will précis, has to do with our current operating

funding situation. I should like Mr Sabo, our superintendent of business, to highlight that.

Mr Sabo: I will attempt to highlight. On page 16, under funding model, as you know, the mill rate equalization plan is the mechanism presently used for distribution of provincial education dollars. The principles listed there are intended to uphold equality of educational opportunity and equalization of financial resources. It is also intended to support the idea of equal yield for equal effort. In other words, whatever the level of wealth, whether it be assessment-rich or assessment-poor, all boards should experience a similar local tax effort. We agree with these ideals.

On many occasions, and as documented by the Macdonald commission, it has clearly been stated that the current plan has been successful only up to what is known as the ceiling or approved levels. Anything beyond that level is 100 per cent covered by the local taxpayers with zero per cent raised in grant. Obviously, the difficulty results that the assessment-rich board is able to handle those above-ceiling costs in a greater way than the assessment-poor board. In terms of assessment, as Mr Bobesich said, a lot of the detail is listed in the appendices. We have three examples comparing actual numbers in the assessment section.

In example 1, I identify on a per-pupil basis the impact of equalized assessment on local revenue generating power. Essentially, when you go through the numbers, it says that for every \$100 we are able to raise, the public coterminous board is able to raise \$225 and Metro Toronto is able to raise \$363. Something is wrong there.

Example 2 illustrates the local revenue raised per mill per student. Again, the numbers are listed, but it clearly shows a discrepancy in both residential and commercial. The discrepancy in terms of residential assessment is due particularly to the present assessment rules and what we call the default clause. If you do not designate you are a public school supporter, it is automatic. However, the major discrepancy is in the commercial assessment area where, as an example, for every \$1 we raise our public board is able to raise \$4.48.

Example 3, and again I am going very quickly, highlights the fact that in York region in 1988 we were responsible and held accountable for educating 35 per cent of the pupils, yet we had access to only 21 per cent of the assessment base.

We believe the sharing and the provincial initiative on pooling are a major step towards equity. We highlight that it is a step towards,

because when all is said and done, after the long, six-year, phase-in period, those numbers in the examples above will be narrowed; however, there still will be some discrepancies.

We are aware of the impact study done by the ministry that shows additional funding that will come our way over the six-year period. We are very pleased with that proposal. However, we are discouraged somewhat by the fact that the province, recognizing there is an inequity, has chosen to phase it in over a lengthy six-year period and use a residential assessment base for the split as opposed to per pupil.

Grant ceilings: We have it well documented that grant ceilings are of some concern by all boards in Ontario, that the grant ceilings are inadequate. As we are a grant-reliant board, the level of grant ceilings is of particular significance because anything above that has to be spread over our small assessment base.

In appendix F, we list the 1987 actual per-pupil expenditures for all boards surrounding York region. From ministry statistics, all 10 boards are spending above the grant ceilings. It clearly shows that the public boards are spending far in excess over ceilings than what the separate boards are doing. It is clear we are saying that with this evidence it shows that the grant ceilings are not reflective of actual cost.

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Transportation funding is another area where we have documented the process we have to go through annually for developing a budget. For 1989, we are \$3.3 million over ceiling in transportation, which, as Mr Bobesich spoke to previously, translates into five cents of every dollar we receive from our taxpayers going towards support of this overceiling. We believe the costs we are paying for transportation are the actual costs associated with operating a system in York region, with the shortage of drivers and all the other factors. We have gone through a major tendering process whereby actual costs were determined as listed. As an assessment-poor board, we are forced into making sure that we control and streamline our costs because whatever we do not control has to be raised from the local taxpayers.

I will pass it on to Mr Bobesich.

Mr Bobesich: We simply make note in the subsequent pages of the fact that initiatives, albeit good initiatives, always have a financial impact on us. Seldom do we receive compensation for initiatives that are introduced at the provincial level. The most recent examples, of course, have to do with reduction of class size,

which has been somewhat subsidized, to be fair, but the new health levy that is imposed is going to have a negative impact on our finances. Several projects that we are involved in right now that are costing us beyond expectation are the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the pay equity project, child care services and, of course, new curriculum, which is always coming out of the ministry and which we have learned to cope with, or at least to live with.

Funding difficulties, précised on pages 22 and 23, I think you can appreciate. We recognize, as I have said, that we have the capacity or the ability or the authority to raise taxes, but in reality there is a limit to how much we can do there. It is no longer adequate for the ministry to say, "In order to support your programs, assess the local ratepayer." We just cannot do that to a greater extent than we have done.

We have a section on accountability. We welcome accountability. In recent correspondence with the minister where we were decrying and really telling about our deficit, we said: "We welcome you to come out here and look at our operation, our books and how we are spending money. We want to be held accountable." But I think accountability should be framed in the context of ability to produce and ability to pay. I do not think we should be held accountable by either the local constituency or the province of Ontario if we are unable to deliver mandates or fulfil expectations that we simply cannot afford. But we do welcome the notion of accountability.

In view of the time, we are hoping that your reform process results in a situation that provides for equity of funding and enables us to live up to some of the provincial mandates. We reasonably live up to some of the local expectations and I give reference to the fact that we have high expectations out there.

In conclusion, and we say this with sincerity, we appreciate the opportunity to speak with you. I hope that in the context of this paper and in your own reflective reading of the paper we have shown the financial burden presently being placed on our board. We urge you to move quickly to reform the present method of financing education in this province. I know the task that is before you. We wish you courage, wisdom, good luck and resolve as you work towards a better realization of the collective ideal.

I have to remind myself, staff and trustees that the reason we are doing this is to ensure a better deal for the youngsters in our schools. Ontario has always promoted this phrase that talks about

equal opportunity for all youngsters. I think you have an opportunity to move a little closer to that ideal with a reform in funding, but if we do not see any kind of reform, I do not think that is a true statement. Our primary objective here, collectively I hope, is to ensure equal educational opportunity for all the kids in the schools across the province, in assessment-rich and assessment-poor boards.

The Chairman: Thank you for a very extensive brief that dramatically highlights your concerns as a high-growth board. In view of the fact that we have run out of time for this presentation, I am going to limit the questions to two, starting with Mr Johnston and followed by Mr Keyes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have been receiving a number of pretty devastating reports in the last day or two. Some of the debts that are being carried in the Windsor area by Catholic boards are really quite stunning, and the Sarnia board, in particular, I thought put forward a very hopeless kind of scenario for its own situation there. I gather you have avoided the actual operating debt scenario, although you have the debentures, which you went into in some detail, but in terms of operating, you avoided running into an actual deficit by the increase you brought forward in the mill rate.

Mr Bobesich: No. We limited that dramatically by the increase, but we are currently carrying a \$3.2-million deficit.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A \$3.2-million deficit. Sorry; I missed that.

Mr Bobesich: That is why I invited the minister to come out and check our books.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you give me some idea of what your property taxpayers' burden is at the moment. We always get the mill rate, which is the obvious thing to use, but do you have any idea what the average levy is these days on people and what you are now carrying? Is it the same as the public board?

Mr Bobesich: No. It is higher than the public board. We had hoped to close the gap between the two boards, but it is higher.

Mr Sabo: Appendix I lists the actual detailed mill rates by municipality in our area and the mill rate differential that presently exists in each one of those municipalities. They are staggering.

The closest we get is in one municipality, Vaughan, which has almost a two-mill difference and we have them as high as five mills. This appendix I is intended to say that if we want to equalize the mill rates, which is our ideal and we

feel it is just for our ratepayers, in effect, given we have no other choice, we would have to reduce expenditures by another \$3.1 million and we are already in a deficit of \$3.2 million, so it is a catch-all.

To answer your question on the average burden, that is a question we go through each year, but we are looking at a \$1,500 to \$1,800 range for education tax.

Mr R. F. Johnston: For education tax.

Mr Sabo: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Curious.

Mr Jackson: That is after-tax dollars people are paying.

Mr Keyes: Do you want to move to York region?

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is beautiful in York region, as someone said, but no, not particularly.

It seems to me that you have stated the problem in very strong, alarmist terms, and rightfully so with the backdrop of statistics you are giving us. But in terms of the solutions, I think you are more generous about the notions of where either the lot levy or pooling directions are taking us in terms of overcoming some of those difficulties than we need to be.

I am more and more convinced that we have to have a major overhaul of this system if we are going to ever get to that notion of equal opportunity not depending on where you live in the province and that maybe we should be looking at some other models that are more accountable, less confused than the kinds of things we have at the moment and certainly less deficient in terms of the adequacy.

Mr Virgilio: I think we are happy to get what we get right now. That is why we are so generous, I think.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that is the attitude of most boards.

Mr Virgilio: Our board would agree with you wholeheartedly.

Mr Bobesich: Clearly, if we had an opportunity to influence an acceleration of our access to commercial and industrial assessment, we would not spread it over six years. We would say: "We're reasonable folks. How about three?"

Mr R. F. Johnston: That has been proposed by several boards.

Mr Bobesich: Give us a break in that regard.

Interjection: How about one?

Mr Bobesich: Well, that is not compromising.

Mr Keyes: This brief has probably highlighted more cogently than the rest the dilemma of the high-growth areas. I do not think I would be as hopeful as the director about coming up with a quick solution by this committee and its recommendations to the ministry, or the ministry in arriving at solutions to high growth.

I am wondering about two things. First, what is the level of funding from the province to your board, approximately. What is the percentage of funding level?

Mr Sabo: At elementary, we are at 76 per cent and at secondary at about 68 per cent.

Mr Keyes: Frankly, that is high, when we hear the complaints from areas where it is down under 30 per cent, etc. I am wondering what other—

Mr Bobesich: Mr Keyes, we would trade with some of those boards.

Mr Sabo: I would much rather have a zero per cent tax rate.

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Mr Keyes: You would trade with those.

Mr Sabo: Definitely.

Mr Bobesich: Definitely.

Mr Sabo: That is another misconception, I believe. The higher the grant, the more they think we are in a good position. Give me zero per cent.

Mr Keyes: I have not suggested it was a good position. I am wondering if in your sharing of assessment, while you want it more quickly—I think yours is the first board that has said one year; the rest from the separate school boards have said three. I thought they had been together collectively and decided three was the magic figure. They have broken the pact.

Mr Bobesich: All just kindred spirits.

Mr Keyes: One thing: Have you thought about other areas? It would be very difficult there, but do you do such things with the other joint board that was here before you on the transportation issue at all so that you are touching on both boards? Is there any transportation sharing?

Mr Virgilio: We discussed that at a recent liaison committee with the public board and we will look at it.

Mr Keyes: It does not exist at the moment.

Mr Virgilio: It does not exist at the moment.

Mr Bobesich: We tried a few years ago. There was no point in it. The communication was quite civil, but when we did the analysis, there was no point in it, just to say we were sharing a bus when in fact there was no cost-saving to either board

about five or six years ago. We are looking at it again.

Mr Keyes: Good. The other one, though, is important. These boards that are in high-growth areas have horrendous problems. Have you looked at one of the issues—I do not want to say it is the solution, but we talked about year-round schooling as being one of the things that perhaps should be looked at for high-growth schools. That was in our last report. Have you had any committee look at that at all?

Mr Bobesich: Not formally. We have identified it as an area to look at. Our agenda is rather packed with a number of other issues at the moment. I am quite interested to see what some other, more stable boards are going to do with it. I characterize York region as a turbulent system and I do not necessarily have a need to innovate with a 12-month school system right now. I will have a look at what somebody else is doing.

I have some questions about it. Every time somebody throws out an idea, some folks think it is the be-all and end-all or some panacea. I do not quite look at it that way, but our minds are open to it, just like the other question I anticipated, have we looked at the developer's offer of giving us a school for \$25 a year? When you examine that one carefully, that is not quite what it is cracked up to be either. But we are open to any solutions that might help us with our problems.

Mr Keyes: While you are looking for the pooling to be accelerated very quickly, I assume you may not have as strong support when we try to provide that, in quotes, equality of educational opportunity. That you would not like to see this pooling done on a province-wide basis.

Mr Bobesich: You are asking me?

Mr Keyes: Yes, because you are what you quote as an assessment-poor board, but most other boards would look at you as being assessment-rich, even though you are a poor relative to—

Mr Bobesich: Yes, I appreciate that and my best response at this moment to that question is I will be happy to share pooling within York region and then we could look at the future in the future.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A bird in the hand.

Mr Keyes: That is right. It sounds like a Conservative directed that policy.

The Chairman: Mr Bobesich, I would like to thank you and the rest of your colleagues for your presentation today and for your very valuable contribution to our committee.

The next presentation will be the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association. Mr Recollet, perhaps you would like to bring up your delegation. Please be seated. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time, which we hope will allow some time for members' questions. Would you begin by introducing yourself and your panel for the purposes of Hansard and then please feel free to begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO METIS AND ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATION

Mr Recollet: To my immediate right, I have Jim Baker, and next to Mr Baker I have Sheila Oliver. They will be acting as resource people during my presentation and will help contribute to our presentation on behalf of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association.

As you note, our title page is *Avenues of Change: How Do We Get from Here to There? A Position Paper on Facilitating Equity in the Education of the Metis and Aboriginal People*.

"Valued experience, free movement, dwelling arrangements, a sense of security and participation in community affairs, each springs from two distinct sources: personal aliveness and engineered provisions. The measure of wellbeing in a society...is always like a balance that results when use, values and commodities fruitfully mesh in synergy." That is by Ivan Illich in *Disabling Professions*.

The search that this select committee on education has undertaken is a search for creative ways of meshing use, values and commodities of the educational system with the needs, values and expectations of the communities which it serves, now and in the future. This position paper presents the views of Metis and aboriginal people on the ways in which current educational practices can be adapted or changed in order that our people receive an education that is culturally and personally relevant.

The dilemma: The problem, as we perceive it, is the equity-equality dilemma. It is a problem that challenges the assumptions of the dominant culture at the same time as it makes demands on behalf of the minority culture. That the educational system perceives many Metis and aboriginal students as having special needs reflects a deeper assumption that there is a common goal for education which reflects the aspirations of the dominant culture. This assumes that success can be achieved if equalizing factors are put into place. However, success as defined by the

dominant culture may not realistically incorporate the goals of both cultures.

Reforms that aim at changing the attitudes, behaviours and assumptions of the Metis and aboriginal people ignore the fact that in order to assume an equal role in society, the Metis and aboriginal students need to be perceived to be equal. This involves an attitudinal change on the part of the dominant society. Therefore, part of any effort to effect change in the status quo has to have two components, one aimed at the Metis and aboriginal student and one aimed at the education system, which represents a particular cultural bias and set of assumptions about the goals and purpose of education. Any consideration of cost must take this into account.

In order for Metis and aboriginal students to become truly equal, the non-native culture has to be helped to understand and value the culture of Metis and aboriginal people. It is necessary to bring both sides of the dilemma to a common understanding before equality can exist. This may require a change in programming, texts, films, teacher training, etc, for everyone. To create programs aimed only at bringing Metis and aboriginal students into the context of the dominant culture is co-optation, not equity. Recommendations for change have to be made, not only in the education of Metis and aboriginal students but in the education of other students. A possible model in this context could be the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund literature project, which explores ways of infusing cross-cultural understanding through language arts programs at all ages and all grade levels. This kind of approach would benefit all groups in Ontario's multicultural reality.

For change to happen in a classroom, a change must occur in the perception and attitudes of the classroom teacher, and that new orientation must be reflected in the materials that are made available for the teacher and the students. The roots of much of the problem appear to lie in omission rather than in commission. This observation underlies the recommendations that relate to teacher education, resource development and program change. Once these deficiencies have been remedied, program and organizational change can become feasible and implemented where appropriate. Given a changed perspective, administrative change can often be effected at minimal cost.

We believe that the path for Metis and aboriginal people is nationhood and self-determination for our educational system. How-

ever, until this occurs our children require a school system willing to provide special programs and services. Until recently, the public school system catered essentially to the needs of the mainstream student. Students with special needs were often accommodated in special facilities, in separate programs or excluded from the system. The student was required to adapt to the system rather than the system adapting to the needs of the student.

The Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions curriculum guidelines now require as basic policy that, "individual differences are to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible." This implies that in order to achieve a school system that provides equal services to all students, a period of catch-up, which may involve funding of special, short-term arrangements that will equalize the opportunity of each student to develop to his or her full potential, is likely necessary.

"These circulars reflect the policy of the province of Ontario that the program in the publicly supported educational system should be designed to provide the greatest possible opportunity for every student to develop as completely as possible his/her abilities and interests and to meet each student's special needs." That was in OSIS, 1989, Introduction, page 2.

Metis and aboriginal students are from a minority culture, and enter the system from a disadvantaged position because the values and skills which are part of their culture are often not those that are valued by the traditional school system.

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"A differing cultural background provides... experiences that are valuable life experiences but which tend not to prepare the child for the demands and structure of school...."

"Metis and native children often find school structure and regimentation alienating and incomprehensible from their cultural perspectives...."

"Although culturally different, native children may share some of the negative experiences characteristic of inner-city environments."

This is from *What You Are Teaching Isn't What I Am Living or Learning*, a report to the select committee on education on 28 September 1988.

As a group or as individuals, Metis and aboriginal students can be perceived as qualifying for consideration under the goals of education for Ontario as outlined in OSIS. This aims at achieving equal opportunity for all students to

achieve their educational potential by meeting the special needs of some students. In other words, equity involves treatment which can lead to equal opportunity.

Earlier presentations to this select committee on education presented a number of recommendations that share the following components: valuing cultural difference, teacher training, program alternatives, skill strengthening and the relationship between the school and the community.

These are all interrelated, and although many can be accommodated by utilizing existing policy to effect change, some may require alternative financial arrangements. In some cases, this may mean financial expenditure to accommodate the needs of a few students in a setting where the majority is non-Metis or non-aboriginal, and in others it may require a reallocation of the finances of a school or an entire school district. This would be dependent on the geographic distribution of Metis and aboriginal populations, which would affect individual boards differently but would remain a constant consideration for the Ministry of Education on a provincial basis.

A series of recommendations has already been made to the select committee on education. These need to be reviewed in terms of equity, accountability and operating and capital financial requirements. These can be considered on the basis of major funding sources at the provincial level, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, local boards of education acting alone or in concert, and at the federal level under the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Another category of recommendations involves administrative decisions at the local level that alter the disbursement of funds without substantially changing the total cost.

This report explores ways in which the system of education can be modified within the existing guidelines by utilizing available community resources and curriculum alternatives. As well, it looks at changes in the training of teachers, the organization of the school year and co-operation between the educational and social service systems and relates these issues back to operational and capital financing.

"The recommendations contained in this paper are, essentially, recommendations for improving the existing school system. The recommendations in this paper are meant for relatively quick, easy implementation, in tandem with the establishment of aboriginal-controlled school sys-

tems.... Nothing in the following paper should be construed as undermining in any way our primary insistence on the recognition of our right to self-government, including our right to self-government with respect to education."

Again, this is a reference to *What You Are Teaching Isn't What I Am Living or Learning*, a report to the select committee on education on 28 September 1988.

In order to arrive at an eventual position of equality in education and educational opportunity, a number of changes, which we chose to call "equity moves," could be set in motion at the local, provincial and federal levels. Some of these can provide almost immediate adjustments in the system, while others provide the basis for more long-term and fundamental change.

Equity moves:

Basic services: Boards have the obligation to provide a full range of educational services for each student and to inform the parents of children of their rights and duties. This is particularly important when special programs, such as native-as-a-second-language and heritage-language programs, require parent action as an initiating step.

Equity in this case means adequate provision of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, or equivalent arrangements such as distance learning programs in rural areas and in urban areas which have significant Metis and aboriginal populations, to reduce nonattendance and to alleviate the need for excessive daily busing and the relocation of children to dormitory schools.

The goal will be to ensure that students become competent in one of the official languages while having the opportunity to become proficient in the language in which their culture is transmitted within their community. In addition to native as a second language, English as a second language or French as a second language, remedial programs within the school day should be available where necessary and a native heritage language program could be used in other cases as cultural enrichment.

Services to diagnose, counsel and support aboriginal children with learning disabilities and other physical, neurological or psychological impediments to normal progress in studies or in the development of life skills should be available as a local responsibility. Along with this, academic and career counselling services attuned to and supportive of the culture and ambitions of aboriginal peoples to progress to technical and higher studies, the professions, trades and

business should be provided. In outlying areas and small communities, accessibility to those educational services is a continuing problem for all students. These basic services are the financial responsibility of the local education boards.

Program alternatives: Many variations of the organization of time and curriculum, such as quadmastering, a modular approach to curriculum units, altered school day, single-credit timetables and point learning credits, as outlined in the two previous presentations by OMAA to this committee, can be implemented with no or little change in the existing funding arrangements.

A major consideration for facilitating the implementation of already existing alternative approaches to program is the critical process of raising the awareness of local trustees, the community and the teaching staff. This requires that the local boards undertake research and implementation studies to decide the appropriate alternatives that would best suit the needs of the community and provide the appropriate professional and financial support to implement equitable change.

Mentoring: We feel strongly that mentoring students through the use of community-based Metis or aboriginal individuals who can assist the students to understand the personal meaning of curriculum as it relates to their culture is critical to equity. These people need to be located and given appropriate training in the process of mentoring within an educational context. Their training and payment would be an ongoing operating expense. This can be an effective and relatively inexpensive way of encouraging students to maximize learning potential within the curriculum and to develop transfer skills that enable them to connect the curriculum with the realities of their daily lives within Metis and aboriginal culture.

Distance learning: A recommendation that has not been made in the previous presentations before this committee, but which may find a creative solution to many of the problems of inequality in educational opportunities and facilities, can be distance learning. Distance learning uses advanced technology to bring the learners, learning materials and teacher together in an interactive way even though they may be physically separated by great distances. The use of computer technologies teamed with culturally appropriate mentors could bridge many of the problems facing Metis and aboriginal students in both urban centres, where alternate program-

ming would supplement core program, and in the isolated rural areas where numbers, facilities and teachers create unique problems that are not just those of Metis and aboriginal people.

At the root of this methodology is access to computer technology which requires appropriate hardware and software and an organization framework. This could be organized very locally in a way which would allow a student at a distance, for whatever reason, to take part in a class, or it could be organized centrally to enable students to access an interactive learning system, regardless of their location. Supplementing the interactive computer communication could be on-line telephone communication, exchange of video materials, conferencing, etc.

This technology could work to solve existing problems associated with seasonal moves to different locations and the need for flexible times for study and remediation. The ability to link Metis and aboriginal students with others within their culture would be a particular advantage in situations in which Metis and aboriginal students exist as a small minority within a larger community or where isolation makes school attendance difficult.

Computer mainframes, satellite hookups, program development and program delivery would require substantial costs which could be distributed over a number of boards of education using the service or absorbed at the provincial level by a centralized teaching facility. These costs might well be offset by a reduction in the need for school buildings, onsite teachers, administration and busing. In this kind of learning situation the system of local mentors as learning resources to aid and monitor the students in their care becomes even more essential.

Community-based homes: In some cases moving the student to the educational source is the most appropriate thing to do. For instance, in communities such as Dryden, students living at some distance from the school often find it more appropriate to find room and board during the winter months when commuting becomes extremely difficult and time-consuming.

These students often feel isolated and separated from their culture, which adds an additional stress to being an adolescent student. In these circumstances, the establishment of homes for Metis or aboriginal students, staffed by people from the culture who might also be the mentors for the students, would be a positive move in adjusting the cultural imbalance that now exists. Financial arrangements would have to be made through a co-operative effort by the local board

of education, the regional office of OMAA and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Considerations in providing appropriate teachers: Earlier presentations to this committee have pointed out that in order for Metis and aboriginal students to obtain equity in education, the materials and the presentation of curriculum should reflect the style, values and approach to learning characteristic of the culture. This implies that teachers dealing with Metis and aboriginal students receive specialized training. We recommend a specialized teacher training college or a specialized stream in existing colleges which accommodates aboriginal languages and values, other specialized subject matter and special cultural preparation for work in aboriginal and northern communities.

Some northern teachers' colleges in Thunder Bay and Nipissing offer special training and certification towards a letter of standing. This training is not available for teachers in southern urban centres where pockets of Metis and aboriginal people exist. For these people who are separated from their cultural roots, understanding, sympathetic and knowledgeable teachers are essential. Recommendations have been made to include mandatory academic and practicum elements in provincial teacher training programs relating to the constitutional and political rights of aboriginal people, their histories, cultures, social systems, their objectives and goals and their contemporary economic and living conditions.

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In the area of teacher training the province must assume the financial responsibility. However, the local boards of education have an obligation to provide effective in-service training and support for teachers already in the system who are dealing with Metis and aboriginal students.

To achieve equity in access to quality teaching, incentives in pay, working conditions and special professional awards and recognition to attract the better qualified, skilled and experienced teachers to take and retain positions in those northern, rural schools which have significant numbers or proportions of aboriginal teachers should be implemented. Special considerations should also be offered to teachers in urban centres who need retraining or specialized training to help them best serve the needs of the Metis and aboriginal students. This cost to local boards should receive a special supplement from provincial or federal funding.

Additional career counselling and training should be made available for aboriginal and non-aboriginal teachers who wish to become senior administrators. This can be offered as a no-cost to the teacher incentive by the local board or by the Ministry of Education through its professional development program.

Avenues of attitudinal change: One of the ways to achieve equity in educational opportunity on the way to educational equality is to foster attitudinal change. As has been pointed out in the other presentations by OMAA to this committee, this change in attitudes needs to be facilitated in the larger community as well as among Metis and aboriginal people. We recommend that a department of aboriginal studies be established at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in order to effect the transition to a future institute of research on aboriginal society, culture and language.

This department and later the institute would begin to do research on all aspects of aboriginal society and culture, the production of reports, textbooks and curricula for use by other educational institutions. It would develop, teach and advocate new and experimental programs in the sciences, arts, trades and professions for aboriginal peoples. Its credits should be portable and interchangeable within the Canadian post-secondary and professional systems. It would also examine standard tests, examinations and evaluation in the Ontario education system to include knowledge, values and references from aboriginal contexts so that aboriginal students will not continue to be disadvantaged by measurements which assume the inevitable universality or superiority of non-aboriginal contexts.

The operating and capital costs of this department and later the institute would be funded by the appropriate provincial and federal government departments.

Post-secondary equity: Recommendations have already been made to provide greater equity in access to post-secondary education facilities for Metis and aboriginal students. Most of these recommendations involve alterations in admission requirements, counselling and tutorial services, and would require little additional cost to the university. These recommendations include the acceptance of an aboriginal-language-as-a-second-language requirement for admission, specialists to recruit and counsel Metis and aboriginal students into all diploma and degree programs, the establishment of a minimum quota for aboriginal students in professional schools,

universities and colleges and, in their curricula, to provide for some degree of specialization on the application of that curricula to aboriginal situations. The extension of the mentoring system into post-secondary institutions is highly recommended. These require primarily policy changes rather than new funding arrangements.

In conclusion, "The identification and achievement of the goals of education are shared responsibilities of students, teachers and parents. The major purpose of a school is to help each student develop his/her potential as an individual and as a contributing, responsible member of society who will think clearly, feel deeply and act wisely. This purpose can be achieved when the school facilitates the intellectual, social, cultural, emotional and moral growth of each student and develops more fully the knowledge, skills and aptitudes that each student brings to the school."

This is from OSIS, page 2.

We feel that this objective can only be achieved within a cultural context. In order to move from the existing situation in which Metis and aboriginal students experience cultural disadvantage within the school system, we have suggested a number of changes that can make the situation of students from a minority but founding culture more equitable. Although the ultimate goal for Metis and aboriginal people is control of the education of Metis and aboriginal young people, a number of steps can be taken immediately which can improve the existing situation and enhance their growth and development. Many of these involve changes that can be made with minor adjustments in program, cost and allocation of funds. Some of the recommendations look to the future and envision the creation of facilities that prepare the way for greater change. All take into account a multiple accountability at the federal, provincial and local levels and invest a major responsibility in the initiative of Metis and aboriginal people.

That concludes our report.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. I am glad to say that you have left some time for questions from members. We will start with Mrs O'Neill.

Mrs O'Neill: Charles, I am very, very pleased with this brief again. This is the third time you have come before this committee, and I thank you for your persistence and patience and your clarity. I think this particular brief is the most practical one we have received in the number of ideas that are presented to us. I really do feel a great desire to respond and I hope that our

government will be able to respond to some of these, which I consider very practical, possible suggestions. With that, I will leave it.

Mr Jackson: If I do not lose my voice, I will try to get through it. I appreciate the brief as well. As we struggle with the notions of limited financial resources and a shift in agenda, it is important that we get some of the points beyond just simply receiving your brief for the third or fourth time. This is now the fifth year I have been receiving briefs in which the themes still are consistent.

I had expressed concern, on a personal point, about the province moving so fast in the heritage-language program without regard for the cultural needs of Canada's first people. I was quite shocked and amazed at how much reaction my statements in the Legislature received, which tells me that perhaps we politicians are not aware of what the community is trying to tell us, that we can and should be doing more in terms of addressing those needs for first Canadians, as opposed to setting as a greater priority the needs of immigrant children who may have been in the country only a short time.

Could I get some comment from you in terms of where your concerns are with respect to shifting priorities and why this agenda has not been succeeding? I am having difficulty understanding why it is not. Again, as I say from my personal position, I did not support the mandatory nature of heritage-language programs and I cited as a major example that we have not as yet fulfilled our commitment to those children who were here well before any of us arrived.

I wanted to put it in that context, because I used the concept of priorities and I would like to get some clearer feedback. I appreciate the positive nature of your brief, in spite of the circumstances in which you find your children being educated, but the brief could have been a little more dramatic. We have seen briefs that talked about the need for distance education. Underlying that are the children who are sitting on buses for two and a half hours—that is a one-way trip.

I, for one, am feeling rather impatient about the need to get on with this agenda. Could you talk about the issue of priorities and some of your concerns about where we tend to be going?

Mr Recollet: Yes, I will say a few words, and Mr Baker may want to say a few after.

In reference to language and culture, I think a lot of us around this table right now realize that since the first European contact, the first peoples of this province and across Canada have been

denied their language. You take any other country around the world—Italy, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, the South American countries where Spanish is spoken—usually when you go to these countries you have to learn their language.

As I am going back in time, what really confuses today's aboriginal person in Ontario and across Canada is why this was never done 300 years ago. There are over 146 different first nations and aboriginal languages across Canada, yet that was never made compulsory by the immigration board which allows individuals to come into Canada. So yes, that is not only a problem with you, but it is also a problem with the first peoples of Ontario and across Canada.

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With reference to the province of Ontario, we feel the government is moving slowly, as well as the current British Columbia government, in dealing with the educational problems of our constituents. We are still faced with high dropout rates, people trying to access schools: primary, secondary, even post-secondary schools. Right now we feel that until we get some system which would be available to our constituents such as I mentioned in my previous reports, our own educational system, aboriginal schools, post-secondary, universities, colleges—only then, I think, can we see the real reflection of what our people, the aboriginal people of this province and Canada, can really contribute to the mainstream of society, or call it the multicultural society.

But we have never been given that opportunity by the local school boards or the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities or even the Department of Indian Affairs. We are still classified as forgotten people of this province and across Canada.

Mr Jackson: But Charlie—I am sorry to interrupt—there are provinces that have proceeded much further with the points you have raised than we have here. I am aware of at least two provinces that are further ahead in this agenda than we are. Something has happened in those provinces to help elevate those concerns and get the politicians to react. That is really the nature of my question. What is the missing link to getting this agenda item addressed? We are receiving briefs from all manner of groups, and it is our hope not to water down a final report that talks about "needing to improve in the following areas." We want to get into some solid recommendations. What happened in those provinces to help drive that agenda when it is not succeeding here?

Mr Recollet: I will sum it up and then I will ask Mr Baker to speak on it. To be short and sweet, there has to be political will and action on the part of the government of the day. To date, that has not happened, even though we have appeared for two and a half years before the select committee on education. I think now is the time for action. Maybe Jim could make some comments.

Dr Baker: I think really lying behind this are probably three issues. One is that the way native-as-a-second-language and heritage-language programs are now established, the initiation is left with the parents. When you have a community that has, for a number of years, been devalued and has come to perceive itself as having no rights within the system, then to have the initiating problem laid at the doorstep of the parents exacerbates the system. I realize, and I agree with what Charles says here, that really in some cases the initiating fact needs to be taken over by the political institution that sets up the rules in the first place.

There is a second one too: that is, the contemporary language of Metis and many aboriginal people is in fact French and English. Therefore, it falls into that crack of dominant language, for which there are provisions made for the teaching of the language but not for the teaching of the culture. I think the report is correct in its focus that it is an attitudinal change that has to be made and that the attitudinal change is really as important on the part of the nonaboriginal and non-Metis society as it is within the culture group itself.

The other problem is that many of these Metis and aboriginal people are scattered so far, so widely across the population of the province that only in some areas are they in fact a majority. Those areas tend to be the ones that are already suffering all kinds of other problems related to small communities, northern isolation and things like this.

In other areas they exist in competition with status Indians on reserves, who receive different allocations and special kinds of funding arrangements. I think sometimes the government says, "Indians are a federal responsibility, and Indians off reserves—who are they?" Legally, I guess they fall into the category of the rest of the population.

Ms Oliver: I just wanted to say too that in reading over OSIS, many of the answers are there, if OSIS is used properly and used to the advantage of the groups. The fact is that there are native-as-a-second-language programs,

heritage-language programs and all those things. The capacity is there and they are to be provided when enough individuals ask for them, and it is not even that many. But you have to know you can ask for something first, and so we need that kind of education for parents, all parents, not just the parents of Metis and aboriginal children. We must let them know.

In utilizing those programs, I think some of the answers are there. I think particularly you end up with a respect for language. We really felt very strongly that one of the reasons that we do heritage-language and second-language programs is fairly obvious, so that that culture will be respected. If you respect a culture, then a lot of things happen, I think.

Mr Jackson: Not only respect but survive. There are three native languages in this province that are in jeopardy of being lost completely off the face of the earth by the end of the next decade. I am sorry, Madam Chairman, I wish we had a little more time because I would like to get into the area of accountability with trustee representation. It is a whole other area which is well within our committee mandate, but unfortunately time prevents us. You did briefly allude to it, but maybe at a future presentation.

Dr Baker: Could I just draw attention back to the very first paper that was presented last spring, the 1988 one that is quoted here? In it a reference was made to a letter from a southern Ontario city to the Ministry of Education about hiring a person of native ancestry to teach woodworking. The reply that came back from the ministry in that case was that this would be completely inappropriate because the purpose was to educate the Indianness out of the students. So in fact there has been—

Mr Jackson: How recent was that?

Dr Baker: In 1918. So for a long time there has been this underlying concept that the function of school was to do just that, to not recognize the culture and in fact to suppress the culture and replace it with the Anglo-European culture. Now, I guess what is being asked is a reversal of that kind of unstated policy; but at one point, it was in fact stated.

Mr Jackson: Part of the vertical mosaic was the contemporary change in the late 1950s and early 1960s. You are just asking where you fit on the mosaic.

Dr Baker: That is right, yes.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Jackson, and on behalf of the committee I would very much like to thank the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal

Association for your usual fine contribution to our committee. Thank you.

Our final presentation this morning will be by the Conference of Independent Schools. Good morning, welcome to our committee. You have solved one dilemma for me. Since Dr Symons will not be here today, I will not have to try to keep from calling him President Symons as I did last time. Welcome to our committee.

Ms Robinette: That is not why he did not show up, though.

The Chairman: I am glad to hear that. If you would begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, then you may commence your presentation whenever you are ready.

CONFERENCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr Henderson: I will be making the presentation today. On my right is Dale Robinette, who is chair of the board of the Bishop Strachan School. On my left is Bob Bedard, who is headmaster of St Andrew's College in Aurora. I am Rodger Henderson, the director of the Conference of Independent Schools.

We would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. We understand that your primary focus is on financing of the public systems and we appreciate your taking the time to listen to the views of the private and independent schools of the province.

As I think you know, the Conference of Independent Schools is the largest organized group of independent schools in the province. We educate approximately 20 per cent of all students who are educated privately in Ontario, and 94 per cent of our graduates go on to higher education every year. Annually, we place over 1,000 students in universities across Canada, in the United States and abroad.

Before considering financial matters, we feel it essential to discuss the proper place of private and independent schools in Ontario. Independent schools have existed in this province since before Confederation, historically supported by fee-paying parents or church authorities. These schools are now characterized in large part by pedagogical and operational diversity and over the years have contributed significant innovative programs.

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We do appreciate the complexity of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and we are pleased with recent movement towards improved communication between the ministry

and the private and independent sector. We wish to emphasize the importance of continued support of the private sector. We urge this committee to see private and independent schools for what they are: a mosaic of philosophy and approach to education providing several useful counterpoints to the two public systems.

We urge you to avoid getting lost in labels and painting the entire private sector with one broad brush, and instead to focus on the true common denominator of private and independent schools, that all provide choice to families of this province who feel their children's educational needs are better met in a different setting. We strongly suggest that this safety valve, as it were, is essential in a free and democratic society and that the people of this province are best served by diversity and by a range of options to meet the needs of our multicultural and diverse society.

Most, if not all, of you have graduated from the public or separate systems. They served you well, as they have served thousands of others well. But as elected representatives your concern is now with all of education in Ontario, and that must include the education of the more than 60,000 students whose families feel they need an alternative to the public systems. All of us in this room are trying to provide the best of education for the people of Ontario. That best can be achieved, we feel, in an environment in which the government and the ministry actively seek to create a strong public system, a strong separate system and a strong independent system. How do we do that?

Most groups, both public and private, which have appeared before you suggest that more money is the answer. You will probably have heard the argument that because freedom of choice is a good in our society, private and independent schools should be funded to make them more widely accessible. You may have heard that it is unfair that parents who choose private education are doubly taxed. Perhaps the most difficult argument to deal with in Ontario is the inherent unfairness of giving public funding to one religious group and not to any others.

The Conference of Independent Schools has consistently viewed funding with great caution. Recent legislation in British Columbia provides a good example as to why. The government of BC believes that diversity of choice should be supported by public funding of independent schools. Then, in order to receive the highest level of funding, schools must offer a government-prescribed curriculum, must charge no more than the per-pupil cost in the local public

board and must hire only certified teachers. In other words, they should be very much like public schools.

The essential value of independent and private schools is that they be different, and thus offer choice. To give funding and then demand that they be the same as public schools is self-defeating. That is why we are cautious about funding. For the Conference of Independent Schools, our strength lies in our independence. It leaves us free to respond directly, immediately and effectively to our constituency. There are already certain restrictions on our freedom to do that. We are concerned that funding might lead to even greater restrictions.

In summary, we want to leave you with two main ideas today. The first is that the independent and private sector is a valuable component of Ontario's educational mosaic. It offers parents diversity of choice and a variety of ways to meet the needs of their children. As well, it adds to what we believe is a healthy element of competitiveness in the delivery of elementary and secondary education in Ontario. We think the independent and private sector should be valued highly and be enabled to be innovative, strong and different.

The second is that if ever funding for independent schools is considered—and in fact even now when it is not—strong consideration be given to creating a category of independent school which receives no funds and no government interference. Such schools would thrive or fail on the basis of their ability to serve the needs of families in this province. They would be free to select from the best of curricula from Ontario, across Canada and worldwide, or to create their own. They should be expected to demonstrate that they are in the public interest. Otherwise, they would sink or swim on the basis of their achievement.

By creating such a category, Ontario would avoid the paradox of the BC situation and could lead the country in harnessing the true value of independent education by setting it free. That is our brief brief.

The Chairman: Thank you. I must commend you for this very unique brief in that, first of all, it was brief but, second, I believe you are the first delegation to come before us and not ask for money, other than the Ministry of Education, and if the ministry thought of it, I am sure it would have too.

Mr Henderson: I hoped we might be a breath of fresh air.

Mr Mahoney: I think the first delegation in history perhaps.

Mr Keyes: To any committee anywhere.

The Chairman: That is right. We will be putting up a plaque in your memory.

Now we will have time for questions from the committee.

Mr Keyes: I will certainly carry this brief back to the minister in my new position to him as of yesterday. I am sure he will welcome it greatly.

I wonder if you could just elaborate a little further under your summary under the 14th paragraph about the values that you then would find, even without funding, in being recognized as a category of independent schools. You want to do everything on your own and you do not want funding. I just want to have a little bit more of an idea of whether it is merely to legitimize, I presume, the role of independent schools.

I agree with you on the latter point that I think even today all of these private schools succeed or fail based on the diversity of program and how they meet the needs of the people who want to avail themselves of the facilities. I just wanted more on that area.

Mr Henderson: The feeling is essentially that when we say "no funding and no government interference," we do not want to be deflected away from meeting the educational needs of the students. In part, it is just filling out of papers, it is rewriting of curriculum outlines, it is work that right now, in fact, we are asked to do by the Ministry of Education that we feel does not necessarily help us to deliver a better product to our community. If we could be free of those interferences, as it were, free to allow some diversity in our curriculum, we feel it would, in fact, enhance what we do.

Mr Keyes: So it is to get away from the restrictions that are currently placed upon private schools by the ministry in order to adhere to the curriculum. The ministry is still assuming some responsibility for the content of curriculum.

Mr Henderson: Yes. As one of the people associated with us has put it, just as a matter of principle, the government should not have a monopoly on curriculum. We are not saying that we are dealing with bad curriculum right now. Do not misunderstand me at all. It is the basic principle that other groups might have something intelligent to say about curriculum as well.

Mr Keyes: Where do you see the control factor? I hate to use that word "control" because that is what you want to avoid, but it is accountability. How do you see the government

answering its need for accountability of the education that our children are receiving if it gives total freedom to any group and recognizes a group and, say, divorces itself completely from any responsibility? How do we answer accountability?

Ms Robinette: I think there are two ways that we can do it. First of all, we have to appeal with our graduates to the university sector and in order for us to satisfy our families, we are going to have to be accountable just by that very fact alone or else the universities will not take our students.

Secondly, and I think many of you may be aware of this, Tom Symons is the chairman of the Canadian Educational Standards Institute, which has been set up to try and help the independent schools maintain a certain standard. We have outside independent people coming in and helping to assess the schools and to make recommendations as to where they could improve or where their strengths lie. We feel that we will be able, through this semi-independent standards institute, to ensure that accountability

from the outside as opposed to from the inside of the ministry.

Mr Keyes: I will give some other members a chance to ask questions.

The Chairman: Do any other members have questions? Then I would like to very much thank you again for your brief brief and also for the fact that we can leave for noon hour with at least a nonguilty conscience in this way in that somebody has not asked us for money and we have granted that request.

Mr Henderson: Thank you very much.

The Chairman: I would draw to members' attention that we are starting at 1:30 today and, due to the very heavy schedule, we will try to begin right at 1:30. Mr Mahoney will chair for the first half hour while I am at a funeral and then, hopefully, I will be back with the committee at two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1210.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1345 in committee room 1.

The Vice-Chairman: The chair recognizes a quorum. Our first presenters this afternoon are from the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. We would ask you to come forward please to the microphone for Hansard. Did we lose a member already?

Mr Furlong: He will be right back. Carry on.

The Vice-Chairman: Gee whiz. Thank you for waiting and my apologies for the delay. We have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation which includes time for questions, hopefully. We would ask that you try to work within that time frame. Could you introduce yourself and your panelists.

WATERLOO REGION ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Flynn: We will do that. No apologies needed for the wait. With the traffic, we nearly did not get here ourselves, so we appreciate the concern.

May I introduce the people I have with me and then we will proceed. Helen Mitchell-Pouching is the superintendent of business and finance at our board. Ray Voll is the chair of our board. I am George Flynn, director of education and secretary-treasurer for the board. I would like to turn it over to Ray Voll, our chair, and ask him to begin the presentation.

Mr Voll: With your indulgence, I propose to go over just the first few pages and then jump to the appendix. I will be announcing where I am going, so you can perhaps follow along. At the outset, I would also indicate that where you see the word "position," it is really a recommendation, it is our feeling on that.

On behalf of the trustees and staff of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, I would like to thank the members of this select committee for the opportunity you have provided us this afternoon to share with you our comments on this complex and controversial issue of educational finance. The committee has directed that our comments should be related to three areas under the broad heading of educational finance, namely, equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finances. We will try to honour that direction in our presentation.

Since one could provide lengthy dissertations on any one of the areas we have been asked to focus on, our approach will be to provide you with some sense of what each of these terms means to us and then provide you with some data from our local area that will hopefully impress upon you the reasons for our concern and for our being here today.

By way of general comment, I should let you know that I am speaking on behalf of a school board that continues to be very concerned about the present status of educational financing in this province, and yet the members of the board are extremely encouraged by the government's 1989 budget announcements.

When one reviews the history of educational finance in this province, all the way from the Scott Act of 1863, one can only be greatly encouraged by the words of the Honourable Mr Ward on 18 May 1989, as he introduced details of a plan for changes in the educational financing by saying, "Today, I am providing details of a plan to ensure greater fairness and equity in the distribution of local and provincial educational revenues between Ontario's public boards of education and Roman Catholic separate school boards."

It is our view that education remains as one of the key resources in our society's "journey of hope." As a key resource, surely education in all its aspects, including financing, must demonstrate absolute fairness and equity. The 1989 budget announcements, which include plans regarding coterminous sharing of commercial assessment and some progress towards raising the ceilings, is accepted as a significant step forward towards achieving total fairness and equity.

The dictionary definition of "equity" is fairness and justice and includes corrective action if there has been a failure to accord with what is morally just and fair.

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In the introduction section, on page 1 of the Macdonald commission report, it is stated that:

"The first principles upon which the financing of education should be based are, we believe, adequacy and fairness. It is a goal of this commission that within the resources available to the province, every school board receive adequate funds to meet the needs of its pupils. Further, we want to ensure that Ontarians both

contribute to and enjoy the benefits of our educational wealth in the most equitable way possible."

I reiterate again that the recent government announcements issued with the budget are very significant steps toward bringing educational financing into accord with what is fair and just.

With your indulgence now, I would like to jump to appendix A, after page 11. The interim pages are essentially fleshing out, so I think you can do that on your own time, or if you have questions. The other purpose of this is to allow ample time for questioning. That is why I am jumping this way.

Appendix A: "Explanation of the Inequity of Educational Financing in Ontario: The Regional Municipality of Waterloo."

The following explanation is based on actual data from the regional municipality of Waterloo.

Local revenue for school boards comes from taxes levied on property assessment. There are two kinds of assessment, residential-farm and industrial-commercial.

Fact: Revenue for all assessment for the 1989 year in the regional municipality of Waterloo totalled \$169,511,000 and change.

The revenue split: 59.5 per cent is from residential-farm, and that represents \$100,820,000; 40.5 per cent is from industrial-commercial, and that represents \$68,691,000.

The split between the coterminous boards: The separate school board receives 21.3 per cent of the residential-farm and the separate school board receives 7.7 per cent of the industrial-commercial.

The revenues for each board from assessment on an equal mill rate: Residential-farm generates for the Roman Catholic separate school board \$21,475,000; to our coterminous board \$79,344,000. In the industrial-commercial, the RC board receives \$5,265,000 and our coterminous board \$63,425,000. The totals are as seen.

Enrolment: The separate school board will educate one third of the students. Therefore, enrolment, which is the average daily enrolment of residential internal pupils, the RC is 16,900 versus our coterminous board of 50,700 students.

Local revenue per student: Residential-farm for the RC board is \$1,271, for the coterminous board of education \$1,565; the difference being \$294 per student. The industrial-commercial for the RC is \$312 versus the coterminous board of \$1,251, giving a difference of \$939 or a net total for the RC board of \$1583 versus the public

coterminous of \$2,816, giving a difference of \$1,233 per pupil.

Revenue up to approved expenditure ceiling: Each year, the ministry approves an expenditure ceiling per pupil and grants to bring all boards up to that level on the basis of equal mill rates. Let us set the ceiling at \$3,675, which is the average elementary and secondary ceiling.

For the Roman Catholic board, the approved expenditure ceiling per pupil is \$3,675, and it is the same for our public board of education. Revenue from local rates for the RC board is \$1,583 and for the public coterminous board is \$2,816. The ministry grants are \$2,092 per pupil for the RC board versus \$859 in the public sector. Up to the approved expenditure ceilings, all is very equitable on an equal basis, and that is really all we are suggesting here.

When we go to over-ceiling expenditures, in recent years the expenditure ceilings have been kept low. Almost all boards are forced to go over ceilings. In our example, both boards do go over the ceiling and both do set the same mill rate. As a result, local revenue on the same mill rate for residential-farm for the RC board is \$1,271 and for our coterminous board \$1,565. The difference is \$294. That is an essential repeat of what you see up above. There is no other source of revenue and the final difference per student is \$1,233; per classroom, that represents almost \$37,000.

On the last page, you will graphically see what I have just been alluding to in the appendix. I would now like to go to the conclusions found on page 9.

1. It is the recommendation of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board that the government must deal first with the issue of equity in educational financing. Until fairness and justice are built into educational financing in this province, it is difficult to discuss issues such as adequacy and accountability in any realistic manner. The board, however, is encouraged by the recent budget announcements which appear to at least begin to address the issue of equity.

2. It is the recommendation of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board that the present system has appropriate accountability mechanisms built in, but some further understanding must be reached between government and local boards regarding the development and the implementation of new programs and other initiatives.

Accountability at the local level becomes confusing and difficult when there are dramatic and unanticipated changes in the funding struc-

tures. An example would be the 1989 general legislative grants, when the initiatives are mandated by the government before support at the local level can be developed for such initiatives. An example is the pupil-teacher ratios in grade 1 and grade 2.

3. It is the recommendation of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board that every attempt must be made by the government to get operating expenditures for local boards back within ceilings so that equity is ensured. A way must be found to alleviate the enormous tax burden that is now thrust on the local taxpayer in high growth areas for capital projects. It is a concept that is philosophical, morally acceptable and fair to all of the province's citizens.

4. The Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board strongly supports most of the directions the government has taken in its proposal for changes in educational finance. In particular, our board is extremely pleased with the announcement with respect to sharing of assessment from publicly traded companies. However, we feel that the basis for sharing should be the percentage of students educated, rather than the proposed method.

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With the exception of a couple of practical issues, such as the one mentioned above, we encourage the members of this select committee to support the principle and the general direction of the proposed changes. Your attention to these issues is sincerely appreciated and we hope our comments will be of some assistance.

This report was generated by myself, Mr Flynn and Helen Mitchell-Pouching. If there are any questions to myself and my cohorts, whom I think I will be calling on more than myself, we are at your pleasure.

Mr Keyes: I will be complimentary, I hope, in saying it is one of the low-key separate school board presentations. We have listened to a number in the last two weeks who have just been so exhausted from the task before them. It is nice to see that you have not zeroed in, so you may be hiding some of those major problems in the temerity of your brief, perhaps. But we do not mind that at all. We have been castigated that we must get away from phasing in over six years, must get down to one year and things of that nature. You have not really highlighted that, but I can appreciate the sincerity in your brief and some of the difficulties you show.

Just quickly looking at it, what would be your percentage of provincial grant? Do I gather it

would be around 66 per cent, from a couple of figures I looked at in those appendices, or do you have that?

Ms Mitchell-Pouching: If I can answer the question, in 1989 our calculated rate of grant in recognized ordinary expenditures is between 70 and 71 per cent between the two panels.

Mr Keyes: Many of the boards have found the biggest impact on pupil-teacher ratio. Can you give me an idea of PTR in both elementary and secondary panels?

Mr Flynn: Our PTR at the elementary level as of this month is running about 28.7 and at the secondary 16.7.

Mr Keyes: PTRs get coloured in the way people determine them. Is that basically taking all elementary teaching staff, including the support staff, meaning resource teachers, etc, or is that just straight classroom teachers?

Mr Flynn: I appreciate the opportunity to clarify. That includes only classroom teachers; no other support or other kinds of staff.

Mr Keyes: Librarians or specialists in music and art?

Mr Flynn: Or vice-principals or principals; just classroom teachers.

Mr Keyes: Do you have any idea of the burden of tax rate for education by the separate school supporter in Waterloo region? I knew Mr Johnston might not get around to it. We feel guilty asking the questions if he has not been here to hear the presentation.

Ms Mitchell-Pouching: The mill rate in the regional municipality of Waterloo has been traditionally set the same as for the public board. This year the mill rate, combined residential-commercial, is about 123.4. I do not recall the exact numbers, but it is around that.

Mr Keyes: Translate that into the dollars and cents that the "average family" is spending on the educational portion of its dollar. We are trying to get some ranges in our minds.

Ms Mitchell-Pouching: I would say the average ratepayer would be paying about 53 per cent of the property tax bill, which on the average, if you take that as about \$1,600, would be over \$800.

Mr Keyes: So \$800 would be the figure?

Ms Mitchell-Pouching: Over \$800.

Mr Keyes: Some of the other separate boards we saw this morning said they have been paying \$1,500 to \$1,600 per person for their educational portion.

You have made some reference in support of the pooling of commercial-industrial assessment. But in order to try to still provide the equity that we are looking for, there has been some suggestion that while we begin on, shall we say, the coterminous board level or regional level, we may eventually have to move that to a province-wide situation, again because of the phenomenal differences in assessment between different parts of the province. Does the board have any review of that at all? Are you, like many others, so happy to see the move in this direction? As the last person told us this morning: "We'll take that one while we've got it. When the next step comes along, we'll talk about it."

Mr Flynn: In our discussions of the issue as we understand it at the moment, we prefer to have it the way it is, by municipality. I can see some advantages for areas in parts of the province where this kind of sharing is not going to help them a great deal. Speaking on a personal basis, I would be open to some kind of assistance. I do not think we should jealously guard our particular area, an area that happens to be richly resourced. I think we need to be open to some discussion about another way of better sharing once the dust settles and we see exactly what it means. At the moment we are happy, as you say, with what we have.

Mr Keyes: I am glad you included on page 3 the introduction of the Macdonald commission because I think it is the issue that is plaguing, in a sense, and challenging this committee the most; that is, if I may paraphrase it slightly, to ensure that Ontarians contribute in the most equitable way possible. I think that is the challenge for this committee.

I do not have too many hopes at the moment that we are going to be able to come up with the resolutions when so many other commissions have not, but have you given any thought to looking at the entire method of contributing to the cost of education? Is the property tax the real basis on which it should be done or should we become more innovative and provide other ways? It has been suggested that it be done on the income tax. I do not want to hang that one out as the only alternative. We have seen some gross inequities based on property tax and now we are trying to make it more equitable with pooling of assessment. That may have to go to a provincial level if it is going to be any more equitable, but it still hangs on the same base of assessment.

Mr Voll: I do not believe the property tax is the most effective way in which to raise taxes, particularly for education. It so happens it is a

methodology that has been in vogue for a great number of years. I personally believe that it is regressive and that things from general pooling are more acceptable on a provincial basis.

With that type of philosophy, the government, the ministry, could determine what the general legislative grants, what the levels of educational requirements are throughout the province much more effectively than what is happening now. We see more and more that the costs are being thrust back on to property owners and I personally view that as a regressive move.

Mr R. F. Johnston: An idea I am wondering about is whether we should be doing as you say and moving towards a provincial pool basis of funds through the provincial Treasury, but maybe on the capital side of things be looking at more use of the property tax base, development fees and other assorted kinds of things for the hard services. That might be more appropriate to come off the local tax base, obviously not entirely because the inequities still would flow depending on the nature of the region. We have certainly heard what is happening to growth regions versus nongrowth regions, rural and northern, etc, versus urban.

Is that something that would make some sense to you or would you rather have both capital and operating come off the provincial pool base?

Mr Voll: I believe they should both be coming from the provincial base. Undoubtedly, Ontario taxpayers have to share the responsibility and this is where your sharing would come in for the financing of these benefits, but I really cannot rationalize and justify it in my own mind. I know it is new growth in new areas that is causing the stretching of facilities, such as the hard services including education that you alluded to, but can you fault those particular people for moving into that particular area when that is maybe where the jobs are being introduced and the industries being developed? The province has had some hand in that whole evolution. From that sense, I believe that it is a provincial benefit, growth and cost of education.

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Mr Keyes: I will just follow along from that in the questioning. I want to get your comment on lot levies. Is there not a reason for the taxpayers of the province to expect that those areas that experience the growth, the new jobs, the increased wealth, should perhaps bear a reasonable share of the costs of the hard services that are brought about by that same growth? What is your board's opinion on the lot levy that is currently being studied in Bill 20?

Mr Voll: Again, the lot levy is a methodology that is being introduced, but philosophically we are opposed to it. We do not believe that it is appropriate.

As to the growth you are alluding to, that is where the majority of your population is going to be centred and those are the people who are going to be paying if you are paying in a pooling sense. To say that that particular sector should be paying more for its schools or paying for its schools—the whole philosophy there. In our system, we are looking at some high schools that might not be new ones that are sorely lacking and sorely needed, but may not be built in a new area per se. How would that enter into the lot levy? There are a lot of questions and grey areas. The taxpayer is the taxpayer. I do not know why we should just necessarily zero in on the property owner.

Mr Keyes: I want to hear the response, but I am sure there is going to be a quick question coming back shortly on the accountability factor from Richard Johnston—

Mr R. F. Johnston: There sure is. That will be my first one.

Mr Keyes: —after that particular statement.

Mr Flynn: If I may just add something, I agree with our chairman. The position of our board is to be opposed to this because in our area I do not think it will work properly, but I can see where in other areas of the province it might be a legitimate strategy. As I understand it at the moment, the application just would not pay off for our board. The catch-up takes too long.

Mr Furlong: Could I have a supplementary? Does the region of Waterloo have lot levies on the municipal level?

Mr Flynn: Yes, the municipalities do.

Mr Keyes: I will forgo the rest of the questions, but I am reminded by my astute partner that I have usurped most of the time today.

The Chairman: It appears that we have only one minute, so all these questions are going to have to be very quick, maybe a little more time for answers than questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have two. One is the follow-up on accountability that was presumed by Ken because of my line of questioning over the last period of time. Presuming we do go with the province-wide base that you are talking about, then that begs questions about the role of the school board. Many school boards have tied their notion of accountability to their local tax base, even though I defy any of them to be able to

explain to their electorate just what it is they pay for and what the province pays for and make some sense of that to anybody who is trying to make a rational vote.

Therefore, some boards—I think it was a Catholic board in Ottawa, the first group, that proposed it to us—suggested that what we would need would be some sort of constitutionalized division of responsibility. At least the accountability for the local control would be clear. Have you ever put your minds to that in terms of how we would define that difference of responsibility?

Right now we talk about the province having an overall responsibility for educational policy, etc, but we have to be much more specific, it seems to me, if we move away from having that funding accountability, in theory, that we have now at the local level.

Mr Voll: I do not believe the funding would change all that much in general. You would still have your taxation generated from a particular area. I think we have to recognize why school boards are in existence in the first place. They were developed to represent parents. That goes back 150 or 175 years. They are really the representatives of parents. I think the accountability, from my perspective, the same as yours, is when it comes around to voting and re-electing time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You do not represent parents, actually; you represent ratepayers. That is a very important distinction. If you take away your tax base, then you may very well start to be representing parents and students rather than—

Mr Voll: But at this particular point, they are one and the same.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Okay. I will not pursue that matter further, but I do think that if we want to move away from the present system, we really have to think about being very clear about lines of accountability, which I think we are not very clear about at all at the moment.

I have always admired your board for what it has done around heterogeneous classes, destreaming philosophy and integration in terms of disabled kids. The kind of teacher-student ratios, though, that you are talking about are as high as in many boards that do not have the extra challenges of fully heterogeneous classes at the secondary level, as an example. I wonder if you would talk a little about the financial realities of that. Were there things not being included in those kinds of costs or are you not putting teaching assistants and things like that into the costs? What are you doing with that?

Mr Flynn: First of all, on the issue of integration, it has been documented now that integration, as we understand and practise it, does not cost more; in fact, it costs less. That is a documented fact now. As a moral issue, we as a school board did not identify some of our students as trainable retarded, which under legislation we could have over the last four or five years and we probably lost something in the area of \$300,000 a year in grants by not doing it, but the trustees and senior staff agreed that this was an issue we felt strongly about. So those students have been part of the regular programs, receiving the supports they require all along.

In our view, it is a matter of setting priorities. Often, it is even a matter of attitude. We have not found the costs to be more by following that practice; in fact, they are less. To transport kids to special classes out of their home communities, to have special classes with low enrolments and teacher aides, all that kind of thing is an enormous cost. By integrating, all those costs are distributed and the responsibility is distributed and it ends up being much less.

The Chairman: I notice that Mr Mahoney, the vice-chair, is not here to give me dirty looks so I will extend by one small question. We have had a number of presenters come to this committee on the special education issue, relating to the fact that the ministry has changed the way of directing the moneys to special education. Instead of being a direct grant, it is now part of the per-pupil enrolment. As a specialist in special education, I just wonder what your viewpoints are on that?

Mr Flynn: We are very much in favour of the direction the government has taken in this regard. In fact, we are on record as arguing to have happen what has just happened. It was really a bounty on the heads of TR kids. That now has been removed and they can be treated, be accepted and be part of ordinary schools, the same way as any other youngster. There is less incentive now to treat them differently. We are very much in favour of the direction.

The Chairman: Do you have any ideas on the accountability of it? With the new system, I gather, one of the problems special-ed groups see with it is there is nothing to ensure that money is actually used for special ed. Do you have any ideas on how to make it more accountable?

Mr Flynn: Yes, I would suggest to you that is a matter of attitude. I have no difficulty whatsoever as an educator in defending my accountability for the program for those students. It can be done quite easily. I think what we are

facing is people moving from a traditional kind of provision for special education programs and services to something that is quite new and kind of grasping at straws in that frustrating process of change. I do not think it is a reality. I have no difficulty accounting for the programs for these young people.

The Chairman: I gather from your comments then that you think it takes the label away from these kids and truly integrates them to a greater extent.

Mr Flynn: Exactly.

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The Chairman: Thank you for your comments. I would like to thank the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board for its contribution to our committee today.

The next presentation will be by the Lakehead Board of Education. Welcome to our committee today. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we hope part of that will be reserved for members' questions. Perhaps you would begin by identifying yourself for the purpose of Hansard and then commence your presentation whenever you are ready.

EVELYN DODDS

Mrs Dodds: I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Evelyn Dodds. I am the chairman of the Lakehead Board of Education, and would the record please note that I am not presenting this brief on behalf of my board; I am presenting it as an individual for reasons that should become apparent as you read the brief.

The Chairman: I have just been glancing through the brief and I notice you have 32 single-spaced pages.

Mrs Dodds: I will not be reading it. I will be referring you to certain sections and highlighting the important parts of it.

The Chairman: That is excellent.

Mrs Dodds: Actually, if I had put everything into this brief that I think we should be urgently addressing in the educational system, it would have been three times as long. I selected those few examples that I think might start to improve the way in which school boards are being financially managed.

I give examples here from my own experience that are not usually pleasantly received by some of the people who shared those experiences with me. I feel it is necessary to state them because I do not believe that speaking in abstracts and coming out with general theories has done a huge

amount in the past few years to improve accountability of school boards. I think hard personal experiences perhaps might make a stronger point.

The other thing I would like to point out is that although the experiences are necessarily mine, in all of the discussions I have had with trustees across this province, and with educators and directors of education from other boards and with MPPs, I have virtually no reason to believe that the experiences I have had are in any way unique. As a matter of fact, I would proudly claim that our board is probably one of the better-run boards in the province, and that is not adequate.

Mr Keyes: Madam Chairman, may I just interrupt for a moment, please? On a minor point of order: Could we just have Mrs Dodds give us her orientation in the educational system? Since we are looking at it as being the Lakehead Board of Education making the presentation, are you here now as a trustee or a parent?

Mrs Dodds: I am the chairman of the Lakehead Board of Education. I stated that at the beginning.

Mr Keyes: I am sorry. I missed that. I was checking through. But you are not making it as chairman; you are making it as an individual.

Mrs Dodds: Yes, I am making it as an individual.

The spending of school boards, in my opinion, is out of control and is not being adequately managed by the people we hire to manage it. There are many reasons for this and I offer some specific recommendations for management improvement. Most of these recommendations I have discussed at great length with auditors, accountants and actuaries.

The systems are not unusual systems. These are financial management systems that are commonly employed in other spheres of business. Most of them I have used in my limited experience in other kinds of business. There are several recommendations I will very briefly describe which I hope you will feel free to question me on today or in the future if you feel they have merit.

The second major point, which I could have written another whole brief about, is that I think all proposed spending within a school board should be directly tied to some anticipated measurable learning. We exist solely for the purpose of seeing to it that the future generation shall possess enough knowledge to function as informed and skilled citizens in this society. I feel that we spend far too much money on things that are for the benefit of imagined social causes

and for the benefit of staff, and that we pay very little attention to children's learning as the product we are buying as a public.

Third, there is one topic that is urgently in need of attention in this province. If it is not included in this committee's report it will be a tragedy, and that is the unfunded retirement gratuity liability that exists across this province. The government is to be commended for finally starting to do something about the teachers' pension fund and its unfunded state.

May I point out to you that it has a twin. School boards have been accumulating an unfunded debt associated with retirement that I estimate could be as high as \$5 billion across this province. I have a specific recommendation for beginning to deal with it at the board level.

Just to get an idea of the trends, appendix A gives you the spending figures from 1970 to 1988 taken from the Macdonald commission. You see that school board spending in 18 years increased 418 per cent. However, if you look at staffing to be the cause of that, and if you imagine that it is because we have reduced class sizes, the staffing figures do not bear you out.

Appendix B has figures that I handcopied from rather lengthy computer printouts provided by the Ministry of Education. Some staff categories—not all, only some—are reported on an annual basis by boards to the ministry, but even when you look at those, you will see that lower pupil-teacher ratios do not account for the staff increases that have occurred in spite of declining enrolments.

The teachers employed in the central office or in an administrative capacity since 1977 have increased by 87 per cent, while enrolments have dropped five per cent in that same time period. Paraprofessionals increased by 208 per cent. Clerical and secretarial help has increased by 22 per cent. Supervisory officers have increased by 13 per cent. Consultants have increased by 20 per cent. Other professionals have increased by 134 per cent.

In the time period these figures are derived from, enrolments in Ontario dropped by 100,000 students. It now takes 10,788 more support staff, plus an unknown number of new job categories that have been created since 1977 and are not reported to the ministry, to teach 100,000 fewer students. Unfortunately, staff increases have not been accompanied by an observable surge of academic brilliance in our youngsters. We are spending a lot more and we are getting less back.

I give a few examples of some of the kinds of extravagances and duplications which I have

personally observed and which I resent as a taxpayer. One of them I brought you an example of: I want you to know that the people who run school boards now no longer view their empires as being totally dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. They refer to boards as competitive corporations, to schools as plants and to students as clients. They do not teach students; they serve clients. They do not set standards; they respond to community needs, whatever those are.

Some odd expenditures result, one of which I have brought you as an example. This is a piece of very expensive advertising literature, which contains colour brochures, maps and fancy advertising that was left in a dentist's office in Thunder Bay and put there by the Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I also notice that in Toronto you now have boards advertising in the buses and on subways. This is ridiculous. This is a tax-funded institution to which we must send our children by law until the age of 16.

The purpose of advertising is so that the two, now competing, boards can take students away from each other, and the second reason, which I think is the most insidious one, is that it is used to persuade the public that the mounting criticisms over standards are unfounded. It is sincerely believed by these people who tout this new program called Marketing Your Schools, that repetition of slogans touting excellence will dispel the unease felt by a growing part of the population with the results of the system.

We have administrative expense accounts that would be envied by people running huge corporations. The leaders of our educational system are no longer scholars who lead through example; they are now bureaucrats who are paid wages and benefits that would be competitive in highly profitable industries. Unfortunately, we limit access to those ranks. Even the president of General Motors could not become a director of education, because he is not a teacher.

In professional development, we see that there are many wastes. I could talk for hours on that one. We have sent teachers to Europe in school time using board funds. We sent 18 teachers from Thunder Bay to Minneapolis to go to a football seminar, coincidentally held the same weekend that a major game was being played. For all of these things, the taxpayer pays. I object to this. I think it is time that we cut it out, started finding out where our money is going, made sure we are getting for it what we expected and stopped wasting it.

The running of conferences, workshops and seminars is often conducted now in class hours, which is a double whammy. It means we not only put out dollars for it, but our children do not get the benefit of the teacher we employed to teach them. The running of these conferences has become a very big business, which in my opinion would rapidly collapse if these activities were to be restricted to nonteaching months.

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Busing is out of control because the province hands over up to 95 per cent of the money for grants without paying the slightest bit of attention to what we do with our policies at the board level. We now have junior kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, French immersion, the Catholic system duplicating all of that, francophone schools. We have so many buses crisscrossing our city just to accommodate all of these various needs that it is out of control. It is ridiculous. In our board, we have a \$100-million budget, \$7 million of which is spent on busing. Most of that is handed over cheerfully by the province, without any reference to whether our policies make any sense. That has to be brought under control.

In regard to curriculum management, when the province decided that it was no longer going to have anything to do with dictating what should be taught and instead confined its guidelines to rather esoteric decisions or discussions of what personality development should be like, school boards unfortunately had to institute whole curriculum departments which unnecessarily duplicate each other's efforts, and they use for that purpose rather highly paid people. That is nonsense and that must also be straightened out.

Semestering is not only educationally unsound, it is very costly. The province has added other costs to school boards with the pay equity legislation, the equal employment opportunity thrust, the OHIP payroll deduction, the recent announcements about senior kindergarten and possibly mandating junior kindergarten, drug education, AIDS education. I will not even list them all, because you know what they all are. They are costing a lot. As trustees, we feel that we can no longer even find out where our money is going, never mind control it. In my opinion, the school system of Ontario will fracture irreparably if any more such social initiatives are loaded on to an already overburdened system. Leave social conditioning, please, to the parents.

How to straighten it out? This is tough. I have had some experience in financial management. I was the controller of a gold mine and, if you

know something about mining, I had the thrill of going through an audit that is mandated by the Toronto Stock Exchange. Before becoming a trustee, I rather foolishly assumed that publicly funded institutions that spend the whopping big amounts that they do would have some sort of accountability mechanism functioning on a par with some level of private industry. How wrong I was.

First of all, as a trustee, I have found that the laws that govern exactly what my role is or what responsibility I have are so imprecise that whenever trustees wish to initiate something that is not wanted by administration, we are very easily stopped in our tracks. The law is so poorly defined.

If you would read appendix C, it is a rather well-written condensed version of a three-hour seminar our board conducted with Ontario's foremost expert in education law, Bruce Stewart. What it essentially says is: "You trustees haven't the power to do a darned thing unless you go to the trouble of instituting a whole policy, going through the months and months of putting in a policy. Once your policy is in place, you really can't be terribly sure that anyone is following it anyhow, because you have no external accountability mechanism operating for you."

The first thing that must be done, and I really sincerely hope that the province will show leadership in clarifying this—I have found very few trustees who understand two bits about what is going on within their boards in finances. They think they do, but when you question them in detail, most of them do not. There should be some clarification of the responsibility of trustees and it should be spelled out in law.

Second, I have had problems, first as a private citizen and then as a renegade trustee, I guess you could call me. Even now sometimes as chairman of the board, I have had trouble getting all the information I want. I have to say that it has improved now that I am chairman, but I believe firmly that anyone who has within his power the right to spend public money must never be given the power to withhold information about how that money was spent.

I understand there is a proposed bill that will amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, but as I read it, and it was a very quick reading—please forgive me if I am wrong—it is not nearly adequate enough. It is suggesting that a committee of trustees should decide if information should be made available. That, again, is nonsense. Honesty, integrity and accountability are not guaranteed by the presence

of committees. Group decisions may not be any more enlightened than those of single individuals. If a trustee has the power to spend public money, any taxpayer should have the right to see precisely how that money was spent.

Trustees, in spite of the lack of expert background, can make better decisions if they are the recipients of better information. But you must not put laws in place which depend on the expertise of trustees to decide what information they should have. There are some kinds of information that should regularly be mandated to be placed in front of trustees and which would help to shape the decisions that are made. I bring some examples forward.

Obviously these are going to be examples of reports I wish I had, but after only six months in office, there has not been the time to go through the lengthy rigmarole of persuading administrators, putting recommendations on the floor and going through the whole process. I think these things are things I should know automatically without even having to ask. That would be useful even for trustees who did not have a financial background.

When it comes to annual total staff complements, I can tell you that I have discovered people working within our system who are unable to tell me exactly how many people are board employees. I referred you previously to the province-wide statistics. I do not think it is adequate for trustees to have just that because there are staff categories not included at the moment on the provincial reports. I think that it should be mandated at all schools boards. They should have presented to them on an annual basis a detailed and accurate report listing all people employed by that board in all categories, such report to be verifiable by audit so that we know it is accurate.

We pay to have our children taught. We pay professionals a great deal to do it. We need to know how often they are out of the classroom. Not only does our teaching staff have a remarkably high rate of absenteeism for illness, they are also out of the classroom for personal reasons, committee work, personal professional development, sports events, union activities, in-service training and special meetings. Furthermore, we do not always hire supply teachers to replace them because there are so many extra teachers now running about in our schools that we are able to take someone from down the hall to do internal coverage for teachers sometimes.

In the Lakehead Board of Education, there was only one absence that was reported to us, that is,

the absence for sickness. I have been unable to determine how many days teachers are really out of their classrooms in total for all those reasons. Because that is the service I am paying for, that is the number I want to see. I think that all boards should have that information.

You may not be aware of it, but the balance sheet that you received, which is audited by the board's auditor at the end of the year, does not include the assets that the board has bought. All materials and items purchased by boards are currently expensed on the balance sheet, which means that their existence after the fact is not subject to audit. If you have bought 100 projectors and they have gone into the schools, the value of those projectors is not listed on your balance sheet. When the auditor does your audit, he will not go into the schools to count those projectors to make sure you still have them.

That is a serious oversight that should be corrected. We should know how much we are losing from theft and damage. All organizations that have huge amounts of money tied up in numerous assets spread all over the place want to know how much they are losing from damage and theft. We should know that.

To complete the loop of accountability—and I have two other kinds of reports there that I will not have time to discuss because I want to get to my most important recommendation—I think that the annual audit scope needs to be improved. Sadly, I have had discussions with trustees, pointing out things to them that I think should not be going on. I have said: "Look, I don't think that is good management and I don't think they should be doing this. That is not a good use of my money, darn it." And I will have trustees say to me—and this is not just Thunder Bay: "Well, gee, everything has to be all right. We passed the audit."

I hope that you will take the time to have some people come and address this committee who are experts in audits and who will explain to you the different kinds of audits there are and explain to you the kind that is conducted in school boards. It will take about an hour. Let me tell you, it is not an adequate audit. Actually, the person with whom I have had the most fruitful discussions on this is the board's auditor. He does agree that better audits would give more information to trustees.

I give you a few examples of how the terms of reference of the annual audit should be expanded. I suspect that these would evolve and change over the years as we shift and as we improve, but the most important thing that I am here to tell you

about—I have brought Clarkson Gordon's book which describes this mechanism, and this is the mechanism of the audit committee.

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Trustees are not accountants usually, at least the majority of them are not. They take the majority of their advice from directors of education, who are also not accountants. The person who has accounting experience within the board reports to someone with a teaching background and most of the decisions within the board are made by people with a teaching background.

In order for trustees to know, in order to complete that loop so that when you make a decision you know that it is a good decision, you must have more external advice as a trustee. The Lincoln board has established the first full audit committee, to my knowledge, in Ontario. We put two external appointees on it. We chose them on the basis of their qualifications. We put three trustees on it. Actually, I would reverse that now, and next year we might. I think there should be more external experts.

What they do is vet all technical, complicated financial information that comes from administration and goes to the trustees and apply their technical expertise and advise us. It is working fairly well. They review published financial statements, they review management reports, they review audit plans, they review the results of internal and external audits, they review the corporate code of conduct, etc.

There are several things that I would like to see done with audit committees. I think they should be mandated. I think members should be chosen on the basis of qualifications. They should be paid. Ours are volunteers, because we were advised that we could not pay them under the Education Act, and you do not ask as much of volunteers as you would of people you were paying. There is a great deal for them to do. School boards are now very complex organizations and there is a lot more that has to be looked at than we are presently looking at.

I think there should be more external members than trustees on them. By definition, no one who works for the system can sit on an audit committee. I also think that it would be a good idea for the province to use these audit committees on a province-wide basis, to find out where our money is going. When we know where our money is going and we decide whether or not we like that and we measure what we are getting back for it, then we can start fooling around with property taxes, lot levies and so on.

At the moment, I think it would be irrelevant to enter into any discussions of how we collect taxes because I do not think we know what is happening to the money we are collecting now. Let's first of all clarify it, straighten it out, analyse what is there. Then we can see about perhaps changing where it comes from.

I will be pleased to answer questions. I wish I had three hours. I flew all this distance to present this to you, at my own expense I might add. I will give you these books and I hope that you will pursue it further with people who are suitably qualified.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mrs Dodds, for a very frank and open presentation. You have tackled the whole issue of accountability, I think, to a greater extent than any of our previous presenters and offered some very specific recommendations. We have about seven or eight minutes. We will open up with questions from David Fleet.

Mr Fleet: First of all, I would like to concur with the chair that this is a very coherent, forceful and well-prepared presentation. I want to thank you for the effort that you made in bringing forward a lot of very technical points.

As somebody who is interested particularly in accountability, albeit at a different political level, I have a question about the central thesis, as I understood your presentation. You talked a number of times, in various ways, about getting better value for money spent. That was obviously the core of the message. What I was not very clear on was how you judged the evaluation of getting better learning. What is the test of somebody who is learning better than somebody else or better than he or she might otherwise have been learning?

Mrs Dodds: A great deal of the knowledge that we expect to be taught to our children can be measured, but some of it cannot. I will admit that there are some personality development aspects which cannot be measured, but it is not that difficult to find out if children are learning how to read or if they learned their history or if they know any science or if they can add and subtract.

When we get on to new bandwagons, these new star-spangled methodologies that seem to be showered down upon us now with depressing frequency, no one ever seems to stop and say, "Wait a minute, are the children going to learn more by doing this?" It is lots of fun to show them 10 videos and take them down to the shopping mall and make cookies in class and all this sort of thing, which is very costly in terms of time and money. What are they learning from it? Is

somebody actually testing those kids to see if they are learning something at the end?

Of course, the answer is that as a province we have not, and that in most boards I find that the measurement of results is inadequate. I think we should be looking at outcomes from a different perspective as well. French immersion is horrendously expensive. I am a francophone by birth and I object to French immersion on the basis that its costs are not justified by its results.

I have a whole section at the end. I am trying to spit it out in two sentences. That is almost impossible. I wrote a whole brief following the Radwanski report that deals with standards and accountability. I could send you a copy of that if you like.

Mr Fleet: Although I am tempted to ask a supplementary question on the last comment about French immersion, I suspect another member will ask in a moment.

Mrs Dodds: I hope we do not divert into just that because the main theme today is more important.

Mr Fleet: Let me just ask you, on the same kind of topic but in a broader sense: Surely you would agree that there could be programs, perhaps going on a tour to some other part of the city, where people, whether they are children are not, learn even in a way that is not easily testable. It is not like giving them a test and marking off whether they are going to understand arithmetic, but simply having experiences that are perhaps out of the norm. Surely that is a learning process that does not lend itself to the conventional testing process.

Mrs Dodds: It is a matter of degree. We have gone so far with this activities-based approach that we now think it is useful to take all children down to McDonald's during school time. I do not know of any child, rich or poor, who does not eventually go to McDonald's, and I do not see that any earth-shattering knowledge that makes them prepared for life in a democracy is going to be acquired through this experience.

It has gone too far. There are some activities that flesh out learning, that stimulate the child, that make it more alive, but when you take huge chunks of time and you take them skiing and give them the day off to watch football games, if you take too much time for these colourful activities which have some imagined social purpose, then you rob the time from other areas.

When I taught in the 1960s, we had to teach all the subjects. We were very busy and had a lot of trouble getting through all of our curriculum by the end of the year. We had trouble covering it.

The school day is no longer now. The school year is shorter, thanks to professional development, and you have added all these other things, these things take the time away from the kids and all of these social engineering initiatives; yet somehow we imagined that children were actually going to be able to read as well when they came out. We should have known they would not. Sure enough, they do not.

Mr Fleet: I would like to ask more but I realize there is a time limit and I will defer to my colleagues.

The Chairman: I just cannot resist that about the French immersion, because—

Mr Mahoney: Oh, yes you can. Try hard.

The Chairman: I see our time clock is back. I will mention for members' interest that the 3:30 presentation is cancelled so we are not quite as pressured.

As far as outcome is concerned, my two kids who have been in French immersion for years carried us through Paris and through France last year, and the only time we got into any trouble whatsoever was when I tried to order a kir on the rocks and got a kir with ice cream. So I have to defer to their—

Mrs Dodds: There are other ways of learning languages. I learned English as my second language. I do not think you would consider my ability in English to be inferior. There are other ways to learn languages without having this hugely expensive duplicated system and extra busing and so on.

Second, we have a shortage of suitably qualified teachers in Ontario. We have many people teaching in the French immersion school who do not have the fluent accent, who learned French as their second language. Would you move to Germany, for instance, and have your children taught German by someone who came from Italy and had an Italian accent in German? Would you do that? You are allowing many people to teach your children French within the French immersion context who do not have a proper French accent.

The third point I would say to you, and I do not wish to offend you, but I think French immersion has become—and I usually do not use this word—a snobbish fad. You said you took your children to France and they were able to speak French there. I would like to point out to you that the difference between French in France and French in Quebec is as great as the difference between the English in England and the English here. I am surprised you did not say you took them to Quebec,

because I was given to understand that we are spending these gobs of money to satisfy our rebels to the east, my relatives.

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The Chairman: I do not want to take up the committee's time in a debate. I just wanted to say they have gone to Quebec and France and have been able to make themselves perfectly understood in both scenarios.

Mrs Dodds: But they could have learned it in a less expensive way.

The Chairman: I think if you look at the growth of French immersion in Toronto, it is no longer a snob-type, élitist program. It is tremendously popular.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Statistically, the kids who drop out of French immersion in Toronto are working-class kids, as you know by the latest report that came out.

The Chairman: And it is not for every child.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is the one point on which Mrs Dodds and I agree.

Mr Fleet: Is that the only one?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I looked for some others. A comprehensive audit is a good idea.

Mrs Dodds: You thought it was all right for the 18 teachers to go to the football game.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The pedagogical premises are—aargh. We will still pay your expenses down, anyhow. Do not worry.

Mrs Dodds: You mean someone will pay my expenses?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes we will. Just for the entertainment value, if nothing else.

The Chairman: I am glad we have Mr Johnston on the record as agreeing with one of your recommendations.

Mrs Dodds: Yes, I am going to make note of it.

The Chairman: Certainly you have given us some food for thought as far as different mechanisms of accountability are concerned.

Mrs O'Neill: On a point of information: This audit that is described, as I see it, would not be classified as a comprehensive audit.

Mrs Dodds: I cannot hear; I am sorry.

Mrs O'Neill: The audit that I see delineated on page 26 would not be what I would consider a comprehensive audit. Is it an audit and not a comprehensive audit that you are talking about?

Mrs Dodds: You are referring to the terms of reference of the audit committee, as taken from Clarkson Gordon's guide.

Mrs O'Neill: Right. I am just wondering if that is what Mr Johnston just referred to as a comprehensive audit, because it is not what I would consider one.

Mrs Dodds: No, those are just the terms of reference of the audit committee, the work that it would do. The committee would, as part of its work, which it is currently doing, for instance, recommend that selected parts of the organization undergo more thorough audits. Whether these would be value-for-money audits or inspection audits or comprehensive audits would be up to the committee, but it would select, on a rotational basis, policy, the implementation of policies, or sections of the organization for periodic review. Then those recommendations would have to be approved by the board.

Mr Mahoney: By the way, I took my kids to McDonald's, not Paris.

Mrs Dodds: That is all I can afford too, is McDonald's. School taxes are too high.

The Chairman: Let's put it this way: We did not go on my salary. Any other questions? Mr Jackson, did you have one?

Mr Jackson: Yes. I appreciate the reference to the unfunded, and in many cases unreported, nature of the retirement gratuity. I have raised that twice before with this committee, so I am pleased that you have addressed it. When I tried to present a motion similar to this, it was defeated because the theory by the trustees of the day was that somehow the province would step in and eliminate it, which I think is a head-in-the-sand approach. It was freely bargained; the teachers have every right to it. Yet it is one of the most irresponsible things I see school boards doing, not reporting their obligations under the retirement gratuity plan.

Second, to put it into context, we are hearing more and more boards talk to us about deficit financing. It strikes me that in this day and age, that recommendation is even more relevant, given that you are now going to enter into major deficit financing and yet overlook one of them.

Having said that, Madam Chairman, when will this committee benefit from a short presentation on the status of that, or has that already been given and I did not catch it, on what the ministry rules are in terms of the manner in which it is treated by school boards in the audits? Mrs Dodds has gone further with the notion of a fund, etc, but I wanted to know what basic audit reporting was required at a school board level, and I was getting some mixed messages.

Mrs Dodds: The audit is conducted under the terms of the Ontario Municipal Act. It is not required that the debt be recorded in any way on the balance sheet, and most boards do not. Our board, for instance, simply includes it as a footnote under "notes from your auditor." Most people do not even notice it when it is there.

You referred to deficit financing. Even boards that do not think they have had deficit financing, because of the retirement gratuity have been running deficit budgets for years and years.

In our board, for instance, of a \$100-million budget our unfunded actuarial liability right now is \$23 million. It is unfunded. This past year we managed, after tremendous fighting, to get \$1.2 million into the fund. That was very difficult to do.

The Chairman: Mr Jackson, in answer to your question about when the committee will have the benefit of the ministry's presentation in this regard, the ministry has offered to have Mr Trbovich and other members of the ministry come back, I think on the afternoon of 3 October 1989, the Tuesday afternoon. They have said they will avail themselves at that time if any members wish to ask questions and they will also discuss in further detail the pool.

Mr Jackson: Not to take up the deputant's time, I understand we have at least two ministry representatives monitoring these hearings and I would suspect that three paragraphs in a short memo to this committee would suffice. If we are responsible for now holding on to every one of the questions we have raised so that we can regurgitate them in the presence of Mr Trbovich, I want to tell you that that was not the understanding I had and quite frankly that is not the practice in any committee I have been on in—

The Chairman: I do not think that is what I was suggesting, Mr Jackson.

Mr Jackson: Then let me just say that I had a very simple question and I would expect that the ministry, having had three or four weeks, could come up with a short answer on that point, because now it would give a little more meaning to a conversation I might have had with the deputant about her point. I am not going to be able to do that, because I do not want to waste the committee's time, if it is not interested, on something the ministry could have shared with me a week ago.

I have made my point. I would like you to encourage staff, who are making copious notes here, to get small memos back to us on some of the points we have raised. It is very much a complex issue which we build on understand-

ings. To wait until all the hearings are over to then have the enlightenment of certain facts from the ministry is not really as productive of schedule as we could have. That is all I want to say. If you can get that information to me before Mr Trbovich has to come and tell me something that he could have put down on a piece of paper, it would be very helpful.

The Chairman: As you are aware, Mr Jackson, the ministry has been providing some information as we have gone along, hence some of the documentation that is before you right now. They have said, in addition, that they are happy to come next Tuesday afternoon. Any clarification that members wish or if they wish a further briefing on the pooling, or if they wish to talk about future direction of the ministry or any items that have not been covered to date, they are more than amenable to do. So I do not think it is a matter that they are going to hold on to everything until next Tuesday. I think it was more for purposes of clarification. Since ministry representatives are here they can take note of your request for today.

Mrs Dodds: If I might just say one thing to what Mr Jackson has said, he is quite right: the retirement gratuity is a bomb that the people of Ontario do not know about yet. Boards would fund it if the province said they had to. Right now trustees moan and wail about it at every trustees' conference I go to: "Gosh sakes, this is terrible. What are we going to do? It is going up." By the way, the amounts we have to pay out each year get higher and higher and higher; the accrued liability is not even going to peak until about the year 2004. By the year 2000 our board's liability is going to be \$39 million. So if the province says, "You must submit by such-and-such a date a plan to fund this reasonably up to a certain ratio," then boards would do it. But right now they are sitting back and they are waiting for you to do it.

Mr Jackson: There are some boards, though, that do. Hamilton does.

Mrs Dodds: Some have, yes.

Mr Jackson: There is no acrimony over the subject. It is dealt with at a regular forum—

Mrs Dodds: Hurray for them.

Mr Jackson: —and more boards should be doing it. Maybe we will end up recommending that. We will see.

The Chairman: Thank you for bringing that to our attention, Mrs Dodds, along with the other information and suggestions that you provided to our committee today.

Mrs Dodds: Thank you for the time.

The Chairman: Our next presentation will be the Ontario Federation of Labour. Welcome back to our committee, Mr Turk and Ms Davis. We look forward to hearing your presentation today. I know you have floated a few ideas before, in your previous submissions, about how we should be making changes in our pedagogical way of approaching education, and now we look forward to your viewpoints on the financial end.

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ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Ms Davis: Well, we are certainly proposing changes.

In our previous presentations to this committee, we have been very critical of the education system in Ontario. While we applauded its goals, we indicated a grave concern about its failure to provide good education to many Ontarians.

We recommended an end to streaming at both the elementary and secondary school levels, commitment to equality of outcome, a core curriculum, development and adoption of new approaches to teaching and teacher training, better measures for ensuring the accountability of the educational system and more integration of the community into the educational system.

We are not alone in criticizing Ontario's schools. It has become a popular sport to bash the public educational system. Hardly a day goes by when there is not a statement by a business leader, an editorial in a major newspaper, a story by a concerned parent or advice from an educational expert about the inadequacies of the schools. Many educators throw up their hands in despair, retreating into cynicism, animosity or apathy.

But it is important to distinguish among the critics, among the types of criticisms being voiced and among the solutions being offered. Many, including much of the business community, want to return to an imaginary golden age when students learned the "basics" and were not inundated with "frills," when there were standardized tests to really measure what had been learned, when discipline and respect for authority were the hallmark of education and when students emerged from school ready for work.

That golden age never existed. Education in the past was a poor cousin to the present. The past is a desirable model only to those with foggy memories or who are ignorant of history.

Reference to this fictional past serves a purpose. It provides a basis for advocacy of change that would perpetuate the inequities of the

present. It gives credence to solutions that would further entrench a system already too élitist, too discriminatory to the working class, too focused on meeting employers' needs, too unconcerned with meeting the requirement of producing an informed and critical citizenry essential to our survival as a democracy and as a world. This fictional past is used to rationalize an attack on public education, an attack that finds solutions in some form of increased private sector involvement in education.

The labour movement's criticisms of the educational system has often been lumped in with these other critics. We want to disassociate ourselves from them, again. Unlike them, our commitment to the public educational system is deepened by our criticism. We feel that more resources must be put into the system to allow it to grow stronger and more responsive to the needs of everyone in our society.

We do not see teachers as laggards who need a good dose of exposure to the so-called "real" world, as if having to teach 35 boisterous eight-year-olds is less the real world than slinging hamburgers at McDonalds, being an accountant at First Canadian Place, selling stocks on Bay Street or managing a bakery in Timmins. We see teachers as hardworking, dedicated people who have the real interests of their students at heart but who often are not given good enough training and who increasingly have to perform under impossible working conditions with inadequate materials.

We feel that the integrity of the public education system—and in Ontario in 1989 that means both the public and Roman Catholic elementary and secondary schools, community colleges and universities—must be protected from those who want to preserve their private privilege through gaining public money for private schools, whether through direct funding, through providing vouchers or by any other means that compromise the public commitment to an exclusively public system.

We also feel that the integrity of the public system must be protected from private interests who want to use the public schools for their private advantage. The goal of elementary and secondary education is not to serve employers, it is not to ensure that exiting students are job-ready, it is not to sort people so universities know whom to admit, and it is not to stratify the population so the current social hierarchy is preserved.

The integrity of the public education system is compromised by efforts to give private interests

privileged access to schools, whether this be through business-industry-education councils, adopt-a-school programs—the notion that public schools are available for private adoption is somewhat repugnant—or other programs that have a similar effect. We must find ways to involve the community more fully in the education system, but the whole community, not just privileged segments of it.

The purpose of our school system must be to educate everybody so that they are better able to participate fully and influentially in all aspects of their lives: at home, at work and in the community. It is to equip everyone with the ability to learn how to learn, to think critically and to be able to act on their views.

Getting increased public support for public education with these goals will be difficult in the current political climate dominated by a business agenda that stresses international competition, less public initiative, smaller government and private privilege.

The real commitment to genuine public education grows out of a vision of collective social responsibility, of collective good, of collective survival or collective destruction.

We criticize the public education system because we realize that a strong public education system is essential to the kind of society that we in the labour movement want to build. It will cost a good deal of money to implement the changes we have advocated in previous briefs and we strongly support the expenditure of that money. Other critics have a different view. Prime Minister Mulroney claims that the education system is central to his vision of Canada while at the same time arguing that urgent needs for improvements would not be solved with money from the federal government, urging instead that more study and more private sector effort be put into the problems. We assume he is referring to the private sector in which only one out of four employers provides any training for its workers, and most of that training ignores much of what is known about good educational practice.

The Premier's Council in Ontario, dominated by corporate voices, complains that the education system in Ontario is not delivering value for the money it receives. We feel just the opposite. Ontario does not provide enough money for the kind of education system we value. The statistics are clear. In 1975, the provincial share of total educational costs in Ontario was 61 per cent. By 1988, this had dropped to 48 per cent. Some 90 per cent of the school boards in Ontario are forced to exceed the provincial grant ceilings in

order to offer the education they presently provide.

The stories of the effects of underfunding the education system are many: 35 children in elementary school classes, decaying buildings, schoolyards filled with portables, ridiculously small library budgets, children having to sell candy to raise money for necessary school equipment, students having to share textbooks because there are not enough to go around. Any teacher or school board administrator appearing before you could add many examples.

With the growing demands being placed on the education system with the rapid social and economic changes engulfing Canada, with the cultural and social diversity of our population, we cannot have the kind of education system everyone claims to want without much more substantial funding. The Prime Minister and his business colleagues are wrong if they think the problem can be solved by a hard-nosed private sector approach to cost-cutting. Most school boards with which we are familiar could give the business community a few lessons on how to stretch a dollar.

Unlike private sector businesses, school boards fortunately cannot decide to make their budgets go further by moving operations to South Carolina or Mexico or Taiwan. Equally fortunate, they are prevented from saving money, like private schools, by refusing to admit those who are more difficult or require more of the teacher's time. Financial pressure and private sector ideology are prompting some boards to adopt shortsighted private sector business practices, like contracting out necessary services, moving to school-based budgeting and shifting non-teaching staff work to part-time and temporary employees. While there are undoubtedly ways in which some money can be better spent by school boards, the fact is that they do not have enough funding to meet the task which they should be properly undertaking. Funding for education must be increased. There is no acceptable alternative.

This raises a second matter. Not only must education funding be increased, it must be raised in a more equitable way. As the provincial share of funding falls, school boards are forced to turn to property taxpayers to make up the difference. The extreme case is Metropolitan Toronto, where the provincial government contributes nothing to the cost of education. The entire \$1,678,000,000 is paid by taxpayers through the regressive property tax. On average, 52 per cent of the cost of education in Ontario is paid by local

taxes on property. We recommend that education be funded entirely by the province and that this money be raised by more progressive corporate and personal income taxes. Taxes for education should be related to one's ability to pay.

In conclusion, we want a real end to the class-biased practice of homogeneous ability grouping in elementary years and formal streaming in secondary schools, not the cosmetic change this committee recommended in its earlier report. We want better training for teachers, and we want them to have the materials, preparation time and working conditions that allow them to help our children learn more effectively. We strongly support smaller classes, universal junior kindergarten programs, full-day senior kindergartens and child care centres in all schools. We want innovative ways to involve parents and the community in all aspects of education. We support special funding for francophone programs, for heritage languages, for programs to integrate disabled children into regular classes and for necessary capital needs.

This all will require a much more significant commitment to education and a more significant commitment to increased funding. Right now, our education system discriminates against the working-class students by disproportionately bottom-streaming them, dumping them out of schools without the skills and the ability they need. It discriminates against working-class parents by forcing them to pay a disproportionate share of education costs as a result of increasing funding of education out of regressive property taxes. We want this committee to make the hard recommendations necessary to change these to realities, and we hope you have the courage to do so.

1510

The Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. We have a number of questioners, starting with Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thanks very much, and thanks for being so direct about the municipal tax side of things. I think many people coming from within the system have found it very hard to step back from the system very far. Instead, they look at some of the ways of bringing more equity to the present system we have. But when pushed, they often come to the same kind of approach, as did the Catholic board from Waterloo today, as a matter of fact.

I presume this means, although you did not say so specifically, that you are opposed to lot levies and that you do not see the point in the regional

pooling of commercial and industrial assessment.

Ms Davis: No, we think this is a much more straightforward approach and would handle all those concerns.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The big question that comes up for us is the question of the role of the local board, because at the moment there is a presumption that the board exists, some people were arguing today, to represent parents and ratepayers at the local level around the education system. If you got rid of their ratepayer base and they then became representatives of users of the system locally, primarily, how would you see that working? Do you see local boards first or do you see a different structure?

Mr Turk: I do not think we see a difference in that regard. I assume there was a day when members of this House were seen as representatives of ratepayers in the province and you had to own property to be able to vote. I just think we should move beyond that level of thinking with regard to education. Presumably the local school boards are very important and have a central role to play. We do not see that role changing. We assume most boards now represent the interests of the whole community or attempt to do so, or should attempt to do so, and should continue to do so even though the funding is coming from provincial income taxes.

Ms Davis: This would strengthen that role.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But there would need to be some kind of definition of it, would there not, almost a constitutional definition of what the board was responsible for? Otherwise, do they not become almost like a district health council? Except it is funded, I admit. But it becomes a buffer—in some ways it is now, it seems to me—for provincial underfunding. Unless you have some very specific roles that they have and some direct accountability, it becomes difficult to know why anybody would participate at all in the local trustee system. It is hard enough right now.

Mr Turk: Except they have a very important educational role to play. I assume a large percentage of the time spent in most boards is, or should be, dealing with education matters, not just financial matters.

Ms Davis: Let's put it this way: This would allow it to be.

Mr Jackson: We are told the exact opposite: "Don't worry about education, just worry about the dollars." That is what we were told when we became elected.

Ms Davis: This would allow that kind of shift to take place.

Mr Turk: And that is what they should be doing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: At the moment, for Metropolitan Toronto we have a two-tiered system, a fairly confused one in terms of accountability. The rationale for having it at the moment is, in fact, for the pooling of resources, etc. Do you see getting rid of those kinds of regional bodies or getting rid of those local bodies in regional areas? Is there a need for both?

Mr Turk: We have not taken a position on Metro. It is our sense that to the extent that Metro exists primarily to deal with financial matters, there is a serious question about its need to continue, given that the five boards that make up the Metro board individually represent a very large and significant area and could well function independently of Metro or without Metro existing.

Mrs O'Neill: There are a couple of items in your brief I would like you to tell us a bit more about. I was rather surprised with the statements at the top of page 5 regarding giving "private interests privileged access to schools." I just wonder if you will say a bit more about that. I would have suggested that there would be a model being built in some communities about how business can participate in education. Some of it, I felt, was quite meaningful. You obviously do not have the same opinion. I would like you to say a bit more about that. Then I have one other question.

Mr Turk: The brief reflects a concern that the labour movement has over not only the role that the business community plays in the education system presently but the extent to which it is seen to be able to offer some solutions to the problems within the education system. It comes up in a number of ways. One has to do with the purpose and goals of education and the extent to which those have an economic focus, which is a matter this committee dealt with in its first round of hearings and on which we expressed our views at that time.

There are several states in the United States that are being looked at by the province of Ontario. These states, Florida and New York to be precise, have set up state-wide business-industry-education councils to advise the state government and, in the case of New York, the board of regents, on all matters of education, not only financial matters but also school management, educational practice, etc. I know the

Ministry of Education in Ontario is currently looking at those models as a possibility for consideration in Ontario. It comes from the notion that the business community has something to offer with regard to these matters in the educational system.

It is our sense that too much of the educational system is oriented to what are perceived to be business needs. We have a much broader view of what the role of the education system in this province is. In fact, our view is pretty consistent with the 13 stated goals that the Ministry of Education has identified for education. But there seems to be a narrowing of this, a turning of it more into the private sector in a complex diversity of ways. In virtually none of those do we see it as being very helpful.

Not that the business community should be excluded; all of the communities should be involved in the education system, but there tends to be a much more exclusive focus on their role. The initiative around business-industry-education councils, of which there are a number in the province currently, become a vehicle for injecting a very private sector mentality and ideology into the operation of the schools. We do not think that is particularly helpful.

Mrs O'Neill: Is this also related to co-op education?

Mr Turk: No, it has nothing to do with co-op education.

Mrs O'Neill: So it is these councils that you are having more difficulty with?

Mr Turk: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Some boards are affiliated with them and many are not affiliated.

Mr Turk: We think they undermine the legitimate role of school boards. We have set up a democratic mechanism in this province to give the community a voice in the operation of the schools, and that is the school board. We really feel that setting up dual structures give a certain segment—and it is almost always the business community, but we would be equally opposed if it were the labour movement or any other single group—privileged access to the schools and privileged influence in what happens in the schools. We feel it is important to work through the democratically elected boards.

With regard to co-op education, that is a different matter. As we had indicated in the last brief we presented, we feel it is very important to have an integration of practical and theoretical learning throughout the course of one's life. Co-op education is one of the most imaginative

ways of doing that. So I think one has to disentangle those two things.

Mrs O'Neill: If I go to page 9, I am disappointed, of course, that you are not happy with our recommendations.

Mr Turk: We have told you that several times.

Mrs O'Neill: You call it cosmetic change. I can see what more you would want at the secondary level, but I did not think we said a lot about the elementary level that could not be fitted into what I consider to be your way of thinking. Maybe you could try to be more specific here.

Mr Turk: One of the problems in the discussion of streaming that we find is that it is treated as referring only to the homogeneous grouping of kids at the secondary level, whereas our understanding of it and much of the literature that has dealt with it refers to that from the earliest grades.

It is our view that the grouping of kids allegedly by ability that starts in the very early grades is the essential part of streaming that needs to be addressed. By the time kids get to grade 9 or grade 10, if they are reading at a grade 5 level or doing math at a grade 4 level, whether you have streaming or not is largely irrelevant. There are so many limitations on what the educational system and the teachers can do with that child at that point.

Mrs O'Neill: You do not see enough flexibility in our previous report?

Mr Turk: No, we did not see that issue being seriously enough addressed. Our focus and our interest is primarily at the primary level and junior level because we feel that is where many of the problems which we try to deal with as secondary school problems arise and need to be dealt with.

Mr Keyes: Could we just spend an extra moment or two in looking at the more progressive corporate tax and the income tax one? We have had very few groups that have advocated the income tax one. I see the concern that you would have, I would think, from the labour point of view because of our "working poor" and the number of people who are beset by increased taxes all the time, particularly when we went from seven per cent to eight per cent provincially and now looking at a potential nine per cent goods and services tax. Then it becomes very, very difficult. What did you see on the income tax side of trying to provide tax credits for people so they would not be impacted on severely? The GST is certainly going to do that.

1520

The second part of the question would relate to the method of providing appropriate corporate taxes. Would there not be room perhaps to have the provincial government level the taxes based on the commercial-industrial assessment of all business in the province, but have it collected provincially rather than use the pooling basis and the regional basis, as we are going to be doing it under Bill 20?

Ms Davis: The first question we are talking about is ability to pay. That is hopefully what a fair income tax system is. You are taxed on your ability to pay, based on your level of income, rather than based on some paper value for a piece of property that you happen to have bought 25 years ago and now, certainly in a city like Toronto, has just gone through the roof. There is no rationale to the system of using property taxes.

Mr Keyes: Great, but let's look more at the income tax side. We have had to build in a lot of "tax credits" in order to assist. Are we going to have to expand that further if we go to income tax for educational purposes, but then again have to build in more tax credits for certain levels?

Mr Turk: In your example, though, when you talked about Ontario going from seven per cent to eight per cent and made reference to the GST, those are not income taxes.

Mr Keyes: No, I realize that.

Mr Turk: Those are consumption taxes and suffer the same problems that we have with property tax, because they are unrelated. We certainly, with regard to our statements on tax policy, are in favour of a much more progressive income tax than we currently have. One of the reasons so many tax credits have had to be built in is because the income tax system is not as progressive—that is, related to the ability to pay—as it should be, and that has had to be compensated for. We would feel much more comfortable with a more progressive system.

Under our proposal, though, the property tax levels would fall by about half. So what we are doing is shifting the way you raise money. Some people would have to pay more, but hopefully it would be those people with more ability to pay than under the current arrangements.

Mr Keyes: I only mentioned the provincial sales tax and GST to indicate the increasing tax burden on the "working poor" that we quite often refer to.

Ms Davis: But so is the education tax an increasing burden on the working poor.

Mr Keyes: Could you comment on the other suggestion of the corporate tax? Would there not be some merit in trying to deal with commercial-industrial assessment and have it collected province-wide and then redistribute it?

Mr Turk: We prefer corporations being taxed on their ability to pay, as well. One of the problems being faced in this municipality, partly as a result of the free trade agreement, is that a lot of labour-intensive industries are under enormous attack. The closure rate of garment factories and others is unfortunately almost identical to what most of us who opposed free trade predicted would happen. Their ability to pay industrial assessments may be quite unrelated to the assessment they have to pay. It is analogous to the problem faced by home owners. On the corporate side, too, we think it is fairer to tax corporations related to profitability.

Mr Keyes: It is not an incentive for profitability, is it?

Mr Turk: No.

Mr Jackson: I was interested in some of the points you might raise that did not find their way into the brief with respect to secondary school students. In particular, I was looking for the notion of strengthening the apprenticeship program and those linkages with post-secondary education, skills development and federal programs. I noticed it was absent and I think I understand why.

I am more interested in knowing if you have given some thought to this: because I get a very strong sense that the appointment of the new minister and his enveloping the Skills Development portfolio has within it some new program ideas which could ultimately lead to more and more of those kinds of programs being delivered at the secondary level, without getting into a debate on whether that is right or wrong, I sense very much that the issues of apprenticeship and linkages to secondary education and the world of work are still a reality which the Ontario Federation of Labour has to deal with, as opposed to simply giving me the side of the equation about the adopt-a-school programs, which I might even agree with you on.

But we do have some concerns about some more flexibility within the labour movement so we can assure students that they can complete their apprenticeship programs and things of that nature, which we know to date we have had some difficulty doing. There is a role for labour within the school, to sort of not make it all private sector, but when we ask you to come to the table to deal with it, we do not always get get

resolutions. Could you help me out with that and just talk to us a bit about that.

Ms Davis: Our position on skills training and all of those issues is that they should be done through public educational institutions and that they should not be done through the private sector. We are very clear on that and have made that position known to government.

Mr Jackson: The province might agree with you because the local taxpayer is picking up 65 per cent of it—

Ms Davis: Well, no—

Mr Jackson: Let me finish—as opposed to some of the models that are now very heavily financed by federal and provincial dollars. Just as we are doing with day care at the elementary level, moving it out of a Ministry of Community and Social Services responsibility at high provincial dollars into a school board environment where it is high local dollars, it is clear there are ways in which any government in Canada can move more and more of the so-called manpower skills programs into the school system where it is high local dollars and low provincial dollars. That is a fear I have. I just wonder to what extent you are examining it from that perspective, not an ideological perspective but a nuts and bolts, who is going to pay the bills approach.

Ms Davis: Of course, our approach is that government should be funding education totally out of general revenue, which gets away from your concern about it being paid for on a local level, and that if corporations have training needs, those training needs should take place through public educational institutions. That does not mean the corporation should not pay some or all of the cost of the training, but it should be done through public educational institutions because we do not trust the private sector to do proper training. It has just been proven time and time again that not only do they not do good training; they do bad training.

Mr Jackson: Do not worry. There are two skills programs that we have now. They have spent \$7 million or \$8 million putting it together and after two years the private sector has picked up only two programs, so there is very limited uptake from the private sector currently on some of these programs. That is another reason I can see the government moving out of it and moving it into a public school framework.

Mr Turk: There are a number of aspects to your question. First of all, with regard to what was included here, we have a very strong view that giving students some practical experience as

part of their education should not be confused with preparing them to have a job. In the narrow sense of preparing them to have a job, we do not think that is the direct responsibility of the school system. It is a much broader responsibility, which we tried to articulate in a previous presentation to this group. One of our concerns, which is reflected here, is that part of the pressure because of the economic turmoil we are in is to try to get the schools to make people job-ready. We think that when that happens, the students get shortchanged in terms of the kind of education they are going to need precisely because we have such a rapidly changing society.

An example of that which relates to your question has to do with the enthusiasm for school-workplace apprenticeship programs, SWAP as they are known. A number of boards are looking at them. At least one board, and I think more than one, has initiated them. With regard to this one board, which I believe is the Wellington County Board of Education, we have had discussions with them about the introduction of the program because the idea of being able to integrate an apprenticeship program into a secondary school education, in principle, is one we can be quite supportive of.

When we saw their proposals, we were greatly concerned because we felt that what was being sacrificed was the quality of those students' general education in order to fit them into the workplace side, so that when they came out of the program they might well be three quarters of the way to completing their apprenticeship but will have a fairly meaningless Ontario secondary school diploma. Therefore, if they choose not to continue an apprenticeship or if five years later they want to go to a community college or pursue some other avenue in their life, because of changing economic circumstances or personal circumstances, they will not be able to do so.

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As a result of those concerns, it is our understanding the Wellington board, along with others, did have further discussions and made some changes. As I understand the way they have instituted the program, a student enters it after grade 10. He is going to spend three and a half months in the school and then the rest of the year in a workplace. We question what kind of academic education he is going to get when he is separated from his peers, when he is put into a working environment where he is clearly an employee and where the working side of his experience is going to dominate the educational side. In principle, we have no problem with

integration and giving those kinds of work skills experiences, as long as the quality of the education is not sacrificed.

Mr Jackson: I know we cannot get into a debate, but what you have just described might be a valid concern if that child were preprogrammed to complete the next three years of his secondary school graduation diploma. But invariably, the programs were born out of a concern for the students who leave in great numbers. I, as one trustee, signed off 100 students in one year on an early school leave program. They were just dumped out into the community and they were working at all fashion of jobs at low pay. If that is what they are relegated to, then I say to you three and a half months in school is a hell of a lot better than the issue of spending that time at home or on the street, or in a low-paying, demeaning job at that critical point in the development.

I do not want to get into a debate. I am simply saying that you are dealing with different types of clientele here. We are dealing with a specific program and I do not wish to—I am not fully familiar with it, but I do want to suggest that there are sufficient dropouts looking for a partial school experience and a predominant work experience and the need to link those is essential.

Mr Turk: I have just one comment, though, and it is not a debate, the problem with what you are saying is that for students to get into apprenticeship programs, they cannot be students who are dropping out or failing out of school. The academic standards and requirements of someone in an apprenticeship in fact are precisely as for those students who are doing well. These SWAP programs do not meet the needs of kids who are failing or otherwise dropping out into the deadend jobs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That's the part-time part-time.

Mr Jackson: That is another wrinkle with the way the Futures program was announced. You are going to hear that from us as critics anyway, but I agree with you on that point.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the Ontario Federation of Labour on behalf of the committee for your usual contribution to not only our current mandate, but also to some stimulating conversation.

Just before we go to our next presentation, while we have the bulk of committee members here, Dr Gardner is going to go over two items briefly.

Mr Mahoney: Are you referring to us as the Hulk?

The Chairman: Bulk, not the Hulk. The first is the researcher's summary of the lot levy committee hearings and the second is a summary of issues and concerns Dr Gardner has compiled for tomorrow afternoon's in camera session.

Dr Gardner: There are two things. One is that the committee expressed some interest in being briefed on the lot levy legislation. Mr Johnston suggested that a first step to that might be to have our researcher who was attached to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Anne Anderson, prepare a memo and then the committee can decide whether or not they want her to come in and go into it further.

Our first thought was to just abstract the summary she had been preparing for that committee, but as she worked on it she did not think that was appropriate so she did a special memo for this committee that addresses some of the implications of the lot levy bill and the input that committee received from boards, municipalities and so on. That is the first thing. Ms Anderson is certainly willing to come before the committee, should the committee wish. Next week I think there are some open slots.

The second thing is simply some discussion notes members may find useful in thinking about the discussion tomorrow of the committee report. It is simply a listing of some of the issues and questions that have arisen during the committee hearings to date. Again, there is no priority or preassumptions of what the committee members will decide, but simply a working document to clarify some discussion.

The Chairman: Do any members have questions of Dr Gardner at this time? Thank you. We will go to our next presentation by the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario.

Good afternoon. Welcome back to our committee. We are always very appreciative of the women teachers' federation's presentations to our committee because they always include a great deal of valuable background information, and quite a valuable perspective as well.

I notice you have a very extensive document before us today; I think we are up to 45 pages or something. I am sure this group can précis to our heart's content. We have allocated 30 minutes for your full presentation time and we would very much appreciate having some time for members' questions. With those words of wisdom, please begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Ms Penfold: It is a pleasure to be back again with the select committee. I am Helen Penfold, the president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. We have here today, starting on my left, Barbara Young, an executive assistant, Joan Westcott, the executive director of the organization and Anne Wilson, our senior vice-president. I would like to add too that we have in the audience with us today, showing how much importance we place on this topic, our first vice-president, Susan Owens, and another executive staff member, Marilyn Roycroft.

Yes, we do have a summary.

We approach the subject of finance with a deep respect for the importance of public education, not only to the province of Ontario but to the nation. For more than two decades, this organization has submitted briefs and made presentations to committees, commissions and task forces on this subject. Our message has been consistent. We have recommended that the province return to its promise to increase the provincial share of the cost of education to at least 60 per cent.

We demonstrated a need to improve the elementary grant ceiling to a figure that more appropriately reflects the actual costs of educating an elementary student. We have consistently stated our opposition to the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment.

We come before this committee in a time of great change for education finance in this province. We face the implementation of coterminous pooling. We face a time when the education component of the provincial budget has dropped to 13 per cent and the provincial share of the costs of education has plummeted to a low of 44 per cent and is projected to fall even lower. We face a time when a burden of finance far greater than ever falls to the local community through increased mill rates and now lot levies. We face a time when the gap between elementary and secondary funding remains.

Little wonder, then, that we face this committee with a scepticism born through our own experiences. However, as we approach a new committee on the issue of financing and a new decade, we will remain optimistic for now. This will also bring a new outlook on the needs of financing elementary education. Unfortunately, in the time allotted to us, we will be unable to cover the issue in any great detail. We hope to make brief reference to the major issues. Then

we will be happy to respond to questions you might have.

To put the current study of education finance in Ontario in perspective, our brief reviews past inquiries into the financing of education. Then we express our concerns about the current review. We are not questioning the need for such an examination, but rather registering a concern about the purpose of such an exercise. This concern is sharpened by the recent announcement of such fundamental changes as single-panel funding and boundary changes for separate school boards. We wonder whether hearings by this committee are merely window-dressing for determinations that have already been made.

Our second concern is that financial decisions are being made on an ad hoc basis. An institution such as public education cannot sustain such decision-making for long.

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FWTAO is recommending, as it has before, that a royal commission be established to address the complexities of the financing of elementary and secondary education for the next decade. The Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario, the Macdonald commission, was expected to carry out this function, but it is clear from the Macdonald commission report that the commission felt forced to limit its deliberations.

We have included in an appendix to our brief some passages from the Macdonald report, because the insights in the report are ones that should be studied.

We believe that the taxpayers of this province are willing to pay more for education. Statistics from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education surveys provide a strong indication of the public's position on the financing of education. Some 61 per cent of the respondents, almost twice as many respondents as nine years ago, thought that government spending for all levels of education should increase. Add to this the supporters for funding keeping up with inflation and there are 92 per cent who registered their approval for increased financial support for education.

You have asked us to address the future of education finance relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of operating and capital finance. FWTAO takes this opportunity to recommend to the select committee that the school boards and teachers be regarded more seriously as partners in the education process. To this end, we recommend the reactivation of the

Advisory Committee on Financing Elementary and Secondary Education as a useful first step.

In the 1970s, the Minister of Education and the ministry consulted regularly with representatives of both the school boards and the teachers. There was a sense of partnership in attempting to solve many of the day's problems. There have been many changes in elementary education, particularly in the past decade. Elementary teachers recognize the inadequacy of education funding daily in carrying out their responsibilities. Today's classroom teacher is expected to deliver a program developed to meet each child's needs. The teacher is expected to fill the voids in a child's life that result from shortfalls in social and health services, the breakup of the family, political upheaval and economic decline.

Teaching methods have changed. No longer do all the children sit neatly in rows and listen to the very same lessons for the whole day. The children in the classrooms have changed too. The class the teacher faces each morning is not always composed of bright, happy, cheerful, eager children. Every morning, today's teacher sees the real face of poverty, hunger, abuse, violence and neglect.

Our classrooms are receiving increased numbers of refugee children, whose needs go far beyond basic English-as-a-second-language instruction. Our classrooms include many exceptional children who have been integrated into the classrooms without the support systems available in their previous setting, including personnel, teaching materials and technology necessary for children with special needs to truly thrive.

We recommend that an in-depth study is necessary to ensure that sufficient funds are available to provide the appropriate education for special needs children.

Ms Westcott: Each year, the cost of education borne by the local taxpayer has increased, in addition to inflation, for at least two other reasons. First, the provincial government is contributing a smaller portion of the actual cost of education in this province. Teachers remember very clearly the promise of the Liberal Party before it was elected to government that it would return the provincial government's share of the costs of education to 60 per cent.

We look at how the government is trying to do this and we see that it is not by putting money into education, but rather by including in the calculations capital costs and the government's contributions to the superannuation fund. Add to this the fact that the ministry grant ceilings do not reflect the current costs of education and the

provincial contribution of just over 40 per cent of actual costs appears to be almost 60 per cent. We recommend that the provincial share of the costs of education should be not less than 60 per cent.

Further, we cannot speak about increased costs to the local taxpayer without paying particular attention to the grants to school boards. FWTAO supports the intent of the Ontario grant plan to provide equity. In this way, every school board should have to exert the same effort to raise the necessary funds for educating each student. We also support the use of weighting factors in providing equity. However, the provincial government is failing to recognize an adequate per-pupil grant and this offsets the real purpose of and the equity within the Ontario grant plan.

Between 1984 and 1988 the elementary grant ceiling increased by only 24 per cent. In that same time period, the average expenditure over ceiling soared from \$162.85 to an estimated \$549.70. That is an increase of 237 per cent. I will just remind you that the ceiling increased by 24 per cent. This should be telling the government something. Almost all of the elementary boards are spending over ceiling because the ceilings do not adequately reflect the true cost of educating an elementary child. We recommend that the grant ceiling for elementary education be raised to more closely reflect the true costs of educating an elementary student.

For many years, FWTAO has stressed the necessity for redressing the inequity in grant ceilings that exists between the elementary and secondary panels. We urge members of the select committee to recognize the importance of the early school years in building the foundation of the student's education. Sufficient funds must be available to extend the current program of smaller class sizes in grades 1 and 2 to include smaller classes for junior kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 3, as well as proceeding through the elementary grades.

We also understand that there may be a move towards blending the elementary and secondary grant. While we would welcome increased financial recognition for the elementary panel, we are concerned that there may be an attempt to achieve this equality by depressing the secondary grant ceiling.

The purpose to blend the elementary and secondary expenditures for purposes of board reporting may be a welcome change for business officials, but raises a serious concern for the federation. One of our concerns has always been the tracking of money targeted for elementary programs. At a time when we are asking for more

information, more data and more accountability, we view with grave suspicion this new initiative of the ministry to require less detail under the guise of streamlining the procedure.

We make two recommendations: that school boards continue to be required to report separately on elementary and secondary expenditures and that school boards be required to report in greater detail on the expenditures in program areas.

We also comment in our brief on the provincial government's intrusion into the local tax base. FWTAO has consistently voiced its opposition to the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment. Details about the current proposal do not lessen this concern. Will equity truly mean improving the tax base for the separate schools with no financial loss for the public school system, or will equity be achieved by levelling and depressing the public school system? We fear the latter.

Now we understand that the government will also be altering the boundaries of many separate school boards, stating that the impact on the public school system will be minimal. Yet there has been no impact study of the matter.

We recommend that the province delay implementation of coterminous pooling and the separate school boundary changes until an accurate assessment of the impact can be made. We also seek assurance that no public school board will be adversely affected.

We also view lot levies as an intrusion by the province into a local tax base, since the province will transfer more of the costs of education to the local community. Lot levies are discretionary, but when this fact is coupled with the fact that the province has reduced its share of the capital costs from 75 per cent to 60 per cent, the need for an additional source of revenue becomes obvious.

There will be fewer provincial dollars available for each project and a greater financial burden will fall to the local community. If we add to this the projected \$3,000 additional to the average house should the federal goods and services tax be implemented, the financial burden on the local taxpayer will be even greater.

We recommend that the province return to financing capital expenditures at a level of 75 per cent. We also recommend that any money collected through lot levies be apportioned to public and separate schools in the same ratio as residential and farm assessment and that this money be kept in separate accounts.

An additional intrusion into the local tax base was announced in the 1989 Ontario budget with the introduction of a special property tax, for

Metropolitan Toronto and surrounding regions, of \$1 per square foot on parking lots and commercial properties of over 200,000 square feet.

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Ms Penfold: The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario does not argue with the need for a new look at education financing in this province. Our concerns are about the methods being used and the speed at which they are proceeding. Our final recommendation is that any changes to the method of funding education in this province be delayed until there is opportunity for a thorough review and assessment of the impact.

I believe you all have a copy of our brief. The recommendations are listed beginning on page 44, and the tables and appendices follow those pages.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The window-dressing fear is one that has struck at least a couple of members on this committee from time to time. I think it is fair to say at this stage that the independence of this committee—and its impact is only as an adviser to the government of the day—is such that we cannot preclude government action taking place at the same time as we may hopefully be looking at some more fundamental questions in education.

That does put us in an awkward position from time to time, and it puts me as an opposition member in an invidious position from time to time, in terms of being seen to be a front for the government or giving you some sort of a forum to talk at when really the agenda is being made elsewhere. We have, however, little control over that and so we just blaze away and see what we can come up with on our own and see if it is accepted or not.

To this point, I would say that I am pleased with the committee's independence of the government in terms of its first two reports. We will see. I think the real crunch comes with this one when it comes to financing, when the government has taken such specific initiatives in a couple of areas which you have attacked fairly clearly.

I want to ask you a specific question, however, around the matter which you seem to be considering, the maintenance of the present system of division of local tax base and provincial tax base for funding education. I worry about that because of the role of the provincial government in the deciding of the ceilings, because it seems to me that that becomes the way accountability becomes so

totally confused for people, or one of the ways, at any rate.

The province sets a ceiling which, as you say and others say and I agree with, is totally inadequate and does not reflect real costs. The board then has choices, restricted to varying degrees dependent on the local assessment, in terms of what it can do. All of them are over ceiling and they are over ceiling according to their ability to pay.

But they then, like a board that came before us just today, are caught in the position of raising their taxes by 18 per cent just to keep themselves equal with their coterminous boards and not to lose students and still cut programs. They then take the brunt of the taxpayers' anger for this hike in cost whereas the real problem is the provincial government's unilateral control over ceilings.

I agree that your advisory committee reinstatement is a good idea, and that can ameliorate that kind of situation, especially if it had a specific role in terms of the establishment of ceilings, if there was some kind of process established for that. But does not the Ontario Federation of Labour's presentation which preceded you deal with that matter a lot more neatly in terms of accountability; that is, having it all come off the provincial level and then the accountability is much clearer? When the cutbacks are cutbacks, we can all join in and attack them and we do not get deflected to attacking an individual board that is trying to determine how far it can go to try maintain equality while it is being stiffed by the province.

Ms Westcott: Let me just start with that. We believe that there should be some control by the local school board over the school system and the programs that are provided for the students, because there is some difference between localities across the province. We believe that if the government were able to establish grants that were a little bit closer to the real cost of education—and we recognize that some school boards may still have to have more than that—but if the Ontario grant plan is to be in place, then we think the grants have to be close to the actual costs that the school boards are spending. From year to year, you can recognize the kinds of costs that school boards have to expend in order to provide the program, and if the Ontario grant plan is going to work, then those ceilings have to be higher, the grants have to be higher.

We are not saying that there is not possibly some better way. That is why we are recommending the royal commission. We think that there has to be a thorough study of education

financing, but we are saying, in the current situation, that if the grants were higher, more realistic, we think the needs of children would be more equitably met across the province.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I take that as a given as well, that that would be the case. I guess I am worried about us as a committee only making recommendations which will deal with the short term inequity which is there and not dealing with some of the fundamental problems that underlie the system at the moment.

If I look at the squeeze that is happening provincially—the health budget, if you want to look for a culprit, is rising in a way that is directly provincially driven. They cannot do anything but take responsibility when there are hospital beds shut down and that kind of thing. But in education, where there are enormous needs as well, they can use the school boards as a means of reducing provincial dollars in that area while they are trying to meet the health costs. Continually we see that happening. Now we are down to 42 per cent of the cost of education being assumed at the provincial level. I think that is the danger; nobody knows how to get at them on it because the average taxpayer does not know who to blame.

Ms Penfold: That really goes back, though, to the philosophical discussion of the importance society is willing to place on education. You refer to the health budget: I would also refer you back to our statistics that show that as a total percentage of the provincial budget, education is falling and has dramatically.

Mr R. F. Johnston: For the long term, I think it would be so much easier if we could lay that responsibility on one level of government than to have it as it is at the moment, where one level of government can be played off against another. The boards are always the ones that are stuck with the front line effect on education.

I am not an average member. I have been elected four times; God knows how—yes, I know. But the education matters very seldom come up at the door when you are canvassing, in spite of that being one of our major outlays and in spite of it being one of our major issues. I do not know if other members have found that, but it is in terms of—

Mr Jackson: I remember a certain Premier who was a former Minister of Education, and his name was invoked every time I knocked on it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That was only on the issue of Bill 30. I have never had it happen on any other issue in my 11 years in this place, that

education was a major issue raised at the door, in which I was seen to be accountable as a provincial member. They always thought it was a trustee they should go to, always. I told them they were right: The trustee was the one they should go after.

Ms Westcott: If I could just add to that: Do you not think, though, that if the provincial government was contributing about 60 per cent of the cost the public would understand it was a provincial responsibility? Now, less than half the costs are coming from the province. You can understand why it is seen to be the local school boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not think so, and for this reason—I do not mean to get into a debate. This is the problem. In Metropolitan Toronto, even if we move to 60 per cent, it would still mean that the Metro taxpayer would pay the entire shot, and it would not do anything in terms of changing what happens to a northern board where 95 per cent would already be paid. So I think that is the problem. Even if we moved back to 1975, the issue of accountability would not be clear-cut. Anyway, I did not mean to get into a debate.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much for a very professional brief, as usual. I wanted to go to some of your recommendations. I know your organization has members in both small and large boards and a spectrum right across the province. That is why I go to recommendation 3; this has not come up often, but we are certainly getting very balanced presentations on whether compensatory education and the weight or the grant that goes with that should be considered at all. I am just wondering if you discussed this thoroughly or if this is mainly from your big and large school boards, because it was when we went into the smaller communities that we had some questions raised about this particular kind of grant.

Ms Westcott: It has been our position that the weighting factor still should be in place and that this is the way compensatory education has basically been dealt with in the past. Maybe there is a better way of dealing with that program, but we believe it is not only in the larger centres where there are children who need the special programs because they might be children who need English as a second language; but there is much more to the program they need, for just one group of children coming into the school system.

1600

As you know, we have 80 associations across the province, so we have the opportunity to speak

with our presidents from those associations frequently. It is our understanding that the need is there to ensure that those kinds of programs are available. It has been our experience that unless the program is identified, and here we are suggesting identified through funding, there may not be the possibility of providing that program.

But rather than going ahead and ensuring it be there, we are suggesting that there first be a review so that once we have had a look at what is happening across the province, we can be sure that is still the same way to go. We are not saying, "Go there first." We are saying, "Let's have a thorough review of it first."

Mrs O'Neill: Okay. I wonder, on your fourth recommendation, if you yourselves have done studies on special education and the costing of that just from practical experience within the classroom, or are you equipped to do that kind of study?

Ms Westcott: We have not done a thorough, in-depth study, which we believe needs to be done. We know the Ministry of Education has had some discussions about studies, but they really are not under way to the extent we were hoping they would be.

Mrs O'Neill: Perhaps you would say a little more for the record on your recommendation 13, what kind of reporting in the program area you feel would be helpful.

The Chairman: Just before you get to that, I think Anne Wilson had a comment on your last question.

Ms Wilson: In the area of special education, I am teaching when I am not a full-time officer with the federation. I am from a small, northern school board. Because of initiatives on the part of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, our school board was designated to have a specialized foster family program. Many of the students who had been in developmentally handicapped facilities have been moved to our area, and the costs of those programs are enormous. When we are looking at the relationship in the type of program and the costing, some of the programs are very, very expensive.

Mrs O'Neill: Would most of those have been integration?

Ms Wilson: Some of the students were integrated; some of them, when they first came to us, were in a self-contained program. But I am looking at children who were brought to the school by ambulance, because those were the needs. We were looking at one-on-one and teacher assistants and exceptional costs.

Mrs O'Neill: I am not sure how many people are aware of those kinds of programs, but they are certainly out there in every major area. Thank you for bringing them to our attention.

May we go back to 13, please?

Ms Westcott: In regard to certain programs, we have always taken the position as an organization, when there was a new initiative proposed by the ministry, that there should be some monitoring of both the implementation of the new initiative as well as the funding and how that funding is used. We find that we have been somewhat successful in being able to have that kind of process established for newer initiatives, but with some of the ongoing programs it is not so easy to identify exactly how the money is being used.

We also fear whether we really will be able to monitor how money that is supposed to be for elementary programs is really being used for elementary programs. So it is the total picture of elementary as well as specific programs, areas within. For instance, the class size initiative, if I can use that as an example, was in order to make smaller class sizes so specific programs could be implemented in those grade 1 and grade 2 classes. As you are aware, we have had strong influence on the activity-based programming in primary classrooms. We believe that that money needs to be used for those programs. We want to ensure that it is being used.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sure you are doing that, are you not?

Ms Westcott: That is just an example, but we believe the ministry should be doing it. We do not believe we should have to.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay, but I am sure that in that particular area you are one of the best watchdogs in the province. Thank you very much.

The Chairman: With that accolade you were given at the last moment, I would like to thank the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario for your usual fine contribution to our committee.

Ms Westcott: Could I just make one comment? I am sorry: I forgot to mention that we brought along some copies of the submission we made to the Macdonald commission. Although it was four or five years ago, it was a very thorough report and has some background information we thought members of the committee might find useful, so I will leave those with the clerk.

The Chairman: We would very much appreciate that. As you know, we have been going in some depth into some of the Macdonald recom-

mendations, some via the back door. It is amazing: The more things change, the more they stay the same. I am sure that will be quite a valuable tool for us.

Mrs O'Neill: Did you know that we talked with Dr Macdonald? You would likely be very interested in the Hansard of what took place on that particular occasion. I am very happy, too, that you put so much of Dr Macdonald into the report. It tied it together.

The Chairman: Our final presentation today will be by the Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition. Could you come forward, please? Welcome to our committee. If you would begin by identifying yourself for the purpose of Hansard, then you may commence your presentation whenever you are ready.

PROVINCIAL SAVE OUR SCHOOLS COALITION

Mrs Austin: My name is Dianne Austin and I am co-ordinator of the Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I thank you for the opportunity of being able to appear before this committee to present to you the views of the Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition. Today I am here to make a number of points regarding the financing of capital works in our schools. I will describe the existing situation regarding capital grants and the ramifications this has on boards of education and the communities they represent and then I will briefly suggest what we see to be a possible solution.

Presently, the capital funding grant system moneys are divided into three separate categories: (1) site purchases and new pupil places, (2) renovation and replacement costs and (3) program upgrading.

We recognize the great demand that exists for new pupil places within the province due to overcrowding, but at the same time we feel some of the demand for funding for new schools is driven falsely by current ministry policies. We feel the small amount of funds available for renovations is producing an artificial demand for new school capital.

The Chairman: Dianne, excuse me for interrupting. It might be very helpful for committee members to have a bit of background about Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition, how many members you have and how broadly based you are.

Mrs Austin: We formed in August 1987. I was involved in my own board with a closure situation, and we just contacted other areas. We

have been in touch now with 45 areas across the province that have all faced school closures. We have a core group that works together; we help by making briefs and supplying information to groups that are fighting school closures in their areas. We have now been able to speak at several conferences. That is basically what we are trying to do.

In many cases it is much cheaper to repair and upgrade an existing facility than construct a new building. For example, I will use a current situation within my own board's jurisdiction. The board has voted to close five elementary schools and replace them with two consolidated schools. Estimates by the board set the cost of renovating four of the schools and replacing one at \$1.3 million and the cost of building the two new facilities at \$4.5 million.

Why then did the board vote for closure? Instead of selling off schools, why do we not use our resources to renovate existing facilities? Let us examine the factors which influence board decisions when faced with a school in need of renovation.

1. The chance of receiving funding for new construction is much greater than receiving funding for renovation. As shown in appendix 1, of the \$300 million allocated for capital grants in 1988, \$15 million, or five per cent of the total, went towards the cost of renovating existing school buildings.

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2. Boards of education receive substantial busing subsidies from the province. Thus, increased busing to a new facility has little impact on the board's budget and is not considered as part of the operating costs of a new facility.

3. By using information provided to me by Education Statistics, Ontario, I have prepared a graph, appendix 2, which visually shows that there is a provincial trend towards the closing of smaller school buildings and the creation of larger facilities.

In 1980, there were 291 schools in Ontario that housed between one and five teachers. As of 1987, there were 187, a decrease of 104 schools. In comparison, there were 393 schools that housed between 21 to 30 teachers in 1980. Now there are 467, an increase of 74 schools. Statements have been made by Ministry of Education officials that support this trend to larger facilities. For example, one ministry official, when attending a public meeting of a board, was quoted in the local media:

"When asked about funding to upgrade the schools, the official said there are very few funds available for renovation and those funds that are available could only be used for renovations to the fabric of the building, ie. roof repairs, boiler repairs. There would be no money for the addition of a gymnasium, a library or a kindergarten.

"She emphatically stated that the ministry was not approving grants for building small schools. Although the ministry does not have a minimum size guideline for new schools, she said, the ministry had not approved construction of a new school to accommodate under 275 students."

If you cannot receive funding to upgrade an existing building and you cannot get funding to replace a small existing school, the only option left is to consolidate smaller schools into larger facilities. This is often to the detriment of the neighbourhood or community, especially in the case where there is only one school located within a village. Boards of education should not have to face a decision of closure only because there is no other option available to them.

In another scenario, a board is faced with a school built in the 1950s which is in need of upgrading and expansion. The school has a total student enrolment of 370 students, with 145 of those children being educated in seven portables. The board decides to close and build a new facility. Why? The board knows it would have little chance of receiving funds for upgrading and renovation costs. A proposal to create another school in the community would be denied because each of the two schools would have enrolments of under 275 students. This leaves just two options: (1) pass on large tax increases to local taxpayers to finance the renovations, or (2) pass the costs on to the province by deciding to close the school and build a new facility.

If all capital funding had to be raised by the local board through taxation instead of receiving help in the way of grants from the province, we feel that in many cases other alternatives to closure would result. However, that is not to say we are suggesting that the province withdraw its financial support for capital projects.

If you reduced the busing subsidies, made funding for renovations more on par with funding for new pupil places and recognized the educational value of small schools, then we believe more small schools would be renovated and kept open. This would result in a reduction in capital demands for new school buildings and allow you to get more for your \$300 million.

School boards should be required to look at all the alternatives available to them when faced with a problem such as renovation or overcrowding. Complete costings and impact studies of each alternative, with the chosen alternative specified, should be submitted to the ministry. The ministry should then assess the board's decision with respect to ministry policy and availability of moneys and make a decision that is based on need and financial accountability, instead of on the false economy that now exists.

Mr Mahoney: Perhaps you could, from a different perspective, answer the problem that many boards in large urban areas face, where they may have the pupil places within the boundary of the municipality to accommodate all the children who need to go to school but they are nowhere near the right location. You wind up, as in the case of my own municipality, with half-empty schools in the southeast part of the city and vacant land in the northwest and midwest part of the city where the people want to go to school.

How do you reconcile your position with, perhaps, the need to develop school closure policies that allow for children to be educated within their own community, not necessarily within their own city? In the rush hour in Mississauga, you can be talking 45 minutes to an hour to go from one end of town to the other to get to that half-empty school on a bus. You have increased busing costs to bus the kids from the Erin Mills or Meadowvale community down to the older part of the city, yet the people are saying, "Build the schools where we live, where we need them." Do you have any comments on how we reconcile that?

Mrs Austin: Our group really strongly believes in community schools and community education. That is part of the basis. Most of the situations we have been involved in are in rural areas. There are some urban areas in older parts where there is an older building and school boards are not able to renovate, so their decision is to close and then bus elsewhere. But I strongly believe, if at all possible—

Mr Mahoney: So in fact you would be busing out of the community where the existing school is. You would be creating the exact opposite situation to what we are facing.

Mrs Austin: That is right. In the situation we are in at my own board, we are talking about five small villages. There is going to be extensive busing if the school should close.

Mr Mahoney: In regard to a province-wide direction from the ministry, where you say it

should assess the board's decision and deal with it on the basis of need and financial accountability, it would seem there can be totally opposite positions of need and financial accountability in a small rural community, where you want to keep the local school, versus the those of larger, fast-growing urban community, where 95 per cent of those capital dollars have gone.

Mrs Austin: Right, but there is a definite need in a lot of areas for new pupil places. Some school boards, instead of trying to get funding to renovate an existing facility and build on to it, because moneys are not available just automatically close the school and go and build a new facility. Quite often, because of property availability, those schools are then located outside a community and you get into extensive busing.

The Chairman: You must have struck a spark, Dianne, because practically every member of the committee wants to ask you a question.

Mr Jackson: I am quite familiar with your group's work and have been involved over the years in consolidations, which is the fancy way of saying we are going to eliminate small schools. I appreciate that you have put a financial look at it, which is not usually the projection; it is a lot of emotionalism. That has been helpful to us. But I want to move it into the program area, if I could. The part that concerns me is with respect to program offering, even in spite of the good economic arguments you have put forward. What experience have you had in terms of retaining program or modifying program? I guess another way of asking would be: the elements that do get sacrificed in order to retain a school.

Mrs Austin: There are some elements that do get sacrificed, but you have to weigh and balance which is best for the children: location of school, distance. There is an awful lot of research going on now that is helping to develop curriculum for small schools. I attended a small-schools conference in Montreal and they were talking about how they could network schools in a school board so that they could share expertise; how they could transfer library facilities; there was even some discussion about getting the community library and school library to combine resources so you could make improvements to a small-school and a small-county library system at the same time.

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But the alternatives of making programs better are not being looked at. We are trying to push research in that area, but it is not happening too

quickly because of the way people consider small schools at the moment.

Mr Jackson: I would agree with you on that point. At least two other groups before us have made reference to the lack of dialogue or the territorial approach between municipalities and school boards. It strikes me that in the small-school area there is room for a lot of commonality. You used the example of the gymnasium—sorry, the library.

Mrs Austin: Gymnasiums as well are quite often community, half and half.

Mr Jackson: It strikes me that there are a lot more opportunities for that that are not being encouraged, but that may bring us back to the original part of your thesis, which deals with the notion that there are not the kind of incentive grants or the government has not encouraged us to look in those areas to foster those kinds of agreements. We had the community school movement started in this province about 15 or 18 years ago. It was very successful. It has since sort of died off. It was very much committed to that joint approach, but it seems to have fallen into disrepute. It was primarily a secondary school approach, as I recall.

Anyway, I do appreciate the points you have raised. Perhaps you might add as a recommendation that this program area be explored more carefully in terms of incentives to allow—

Mrs Austin: I think I made that type of point in my first presentation to the committee. What we are finding is that school boards are going ahead and asking for funding to build new schools and they are not going through the process of finding out how much it would cost to renovate. They do not even consider that as an option, because they are not likely to get the funding. They just go ahead and make a decision for closure without even knowing if that is the right decision or the most economical decision to make, and many times it is not.

Mr Jackson: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr Reycraft: My first question is just one of clarification. Can you tell us about the size of the five schools that were proposed to be replaced by the two consolidated ones?

Mrs Austin: In my own area the smallest school has an enrolment of 85 and the largest school has an enrolment of 130.

Mr Reycraft: I am trying to determine the number of rooms you would have in those schools. Three or four?

Mrs Austin: Those are junior kindergarten to grade 8 schools. If you take the one with 130

students—that is my own community, so I am a little clearer—they have separate JK, separate senior kindergarten, they have a grade 1 class, grades 2 and 3 are combined, grade 4 is separate, and grades 5 and 6 are combined as are grades 7 and 8. There is one school that has some triple grading.

Mr Reycraft: And you do not view the advantages of a larger school as being significant enough to close it down?

Mrs Austin: No.

Mr Reycraft: You would rather see kids from three different grades in one room than have them travel a brief way.

Mrs Austin: As long as the pupil-teacher ratio remains at a good level, the quality of education in a multigrade classroom has been proven to be extremely good.

Mr Reycraft: How far would they have to travel to get to the two new consolidated schools the board was looking at?

Mrs Austin: Some of the children would be looking at bus rides of an hour and 15 minutes in one direction. I do not want to just talk about my own area—it is just the one I know the best—but I have been in conversation with people all over the province and the same thing is happening over and over again.

Mr Reycraft: The other point I want to make is that I am not sure I agree with you that it is easier for a board to get capital money to construct a new school than it is to get capital money to repair or renovate one. In my own county, the public board had two capital projects approved in the announcements earlier this year. Both of those are for additions and renovations to existing schools.

I am not clear on what you are suggesting the advantage would be for the ministry to approve a share of two new facilities at, say, \$4.5 million instead of their share of renovation, which would be much less.

Mrs Austin: What I am saying, though, is that in this situation the ministry is funding the \$4.5 million. The board never has considered going the renovation route. They immediately asked the ministry for the funding for two new facilities. The province is funding a portion of the \$4.5 million, as opposed to the board receiving funding to do upgrading.

Mr Reycraft: But the province is funding it because that is what it was asked to fund, not because it refused to fund the repair and renovation.

Mrs Austin: That is right, but the board, because of the small portion of the total capital grants, asked for funding for new schools, thinking that 95 per cent of the pot goes towards moneys to help build new schools and only five per cent goes towards renovation. So they figure they are going to have a better chance of getting a percentage of the 95 per cent pot than getting a share of the five per cent pot.

Mr Reycraft: I am not sure if their logic is sound.

The Chairman: Just before we leave this particular issue, Mr Brumer from the ministry has indicated that he would like to make a point of clarification on it, if you would not mind.

Mrs Austin: No, that is fine.

Mr Brumer: The ministry does provide grants to school boards to operate small schools, that is, an elementary school that is more than eight kilometres from another elementary school. If the board chooses to continue to operate that kind of thing, it can do so and it will get supplementary grants from the ministry to maintain that school.

The Chairman: What you are saying is that the grants are available from the ministry, but it is up to the individual board to initiate it and make the application.

Mr Brumer: If they choose to continue to operate a small school, they can get subsidies for that. The other thing is that in determining the capital need, all the space within a board's jurisdiction that is within a reasonable framework is taken into account to determine the need for an additional school in an area. So the decision to close a school really rests with the board.

The Chairman: Thank you for that clarification.

Mr Mahoney: On a clarification of that clarification, to muddy the waters here, when they get grants, are you talking about renovation grants or operating grants?

Mr Brumer: The small schools get an operating grant.

Mr Mahoney: I think Dianne's main point is that instead of continuing to operate and renovating, repairing or slightly expanding the size of a school, they tend to tear that school down and build newer, larger ones—consolidation. Is that not basically your concern?

Mrs Austin: That is correct. The five schools I am speaking about in my own county do receive an small schools operating grant, but that is

hardly going to help towards adding a new classroom, gymnasium or library. When we had ministry officials come to speak to us at the board, they told us that we would not receive any kind of funding to add on those kinds of facilities to an existing small school. That was made very clear.

The Chairman: Just before you go, Mr Brumer, one other point of clarification. Has the ministry done any analysis of the difference in operating small community schools, as opposed to operating some of the consolidated schools? Is there any difference per capita? What is the ministry's rationale in this area?

Mr Brumer: The ministry has done some analysis on that, and that is the basis of the small schools grant. When you have a small school, the overhead costs of providing the range of programming options increase considerably on a per-pupil base and therefore the ministry provides a supplementary grant in the form of a small schools grant. We do recognize that there is a differential in the cost, but the decision to operate that or not rests with the board.

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The Chairman: Dianne mentioned the difference in capital between renovating and building new, and I am wondering if part of the reason for this rationale of building these consolidated schools instead would be that in the long run they are cheaper to operate. I am trying to figure out why they would build new instead of spending a lesser amount on renovation.

Mr Brumer: That would be a matter for the board to decide. Again, I would be speculating that the board may choose to consolidate in order to provide a larger pupil body to provide—

The Chairman: —a wider range of programs.

Mr Brumer: —a more effective program, which they would presume. That question of effect is a matter of interpretation.

The Chairman: But basically you are saying that it is a board decision in that regard. Do you have any further comment on that?

Mrs Austin: It is a board decision whether a school closes or not. It is sometimes the setup that causes boards to make the final decision. They feel they do not have any other option but to close. That is what we are saying in this brief.

Mrs O'Neill: I see that since you were with us the last time, you have taken the official plunge into politics as well. I want to congratulate you on doing that. I hope you are enjoying it.

Mrs Austin: Thank you. I am not so sure whether I should be congratulated or not.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope you feel that way.

Mrs Austin: It is sometimes difficult.

Mrs O'Neill: It is certainly an area where you can make a contribution. With the kind of outreach you have already done, I am sure that you are making a significant contribution.

Your brief is certainly a happy balance. I am happy that you are signalling for us again how closely transportation is tied to the provision of facilities. I guess, in your short term as a school trustee, you have begun to realize that it was a government policy and certainly a government direction that we provide new pupil places first. There is no secret about that.

Mrs Austin: Oh no, and you have to provide roofs over children's heads.

Mrs O'Neill: It certainly did become more difficult then to continue with meaningful renovations. We are hoping that the new thrust, particularly with lot levies for high-growth areas, if that legislation comes to fruition in the manner in which we expect it to, will free up more money for renovations.

I do not know whether you have done any work in Windsor. You do not seem to have listed that in any of your activities. We were down there yesterday and they certainly have the same situation that you are mentioning, particularly the Windsor Board of Education. They have had six priorities for renovations on their capital forecast for a long time. We are going to have to address that concern, certainly in an area such as that; you cannot take a bulldozer in and knock down a viable school that needs some renovations to serve the needs of the students.

Thank you for bringing us the other side of the picture. It is not always easy to be on the minority side of a point, but you have continued to pursue it.

May I ask you about the Canadian International Conference on Small Schools? Was that a large conference?

Mrs Austin: It was directed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and there were about 65 delegates and representation from England, Australia, all the provinces and the ministries of education from Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Newfoundland and Quebec.

Mr Mahoney: Sounds as if we are going to have to travel as a committee to investigate your concerns.

Mr Keyes: To next year's conference in Australia.

Mrs Austin: So far I have had to pay for all my travelling out of my own pocket.

Mrs O'Neill: Is your board interested in these issues now? Are you going to be able to get a few of those trips on your trustee travel?

Mrs Austin: No.

Mrs O'Neill: That is not going to work.

Mrs Austin: No, unfortunately not. I am in a minority in my board.

Mrs O'Neill: Maybe you can do some of your professional development on small schools and have your way paid. Thank you very much.

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, as Mrs O'Neill said, for your very balanced presentation and for bringing something to our attention that has not had a lot of play by some of the larger boards but is nevertheless a very important ingredient.

Mrs Austin: Thank you very much for your interest. Tomorrow you will be having a little more of the same topic because there is a presentation coming from Ottawa, similar to the same subject.

Mrs O'Neill: You made some friends up there when you were up there with Mr Trbovich and Penny Moss.

Mrs Austin: Yes.

The Chairman: That leads in nicely to the final item on my agenda today, which was to mention that tomorrow morning's agenda has one slight change. At 10:30 we now have—get ready for this one—the subcommittee on capital and property review of the community liaison advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education.

Mr Keyes: Is that it?

The Chairman: That is it. Would you like to tell us what this means?

Mrs Austin: There was a conference sponsored by the Ottawa Board of Education on the lack of renovation funding. It was run by a community liaison group that is a constituted committee of the board.

The Chairman: So when it appears tomorrow morning we will hear more on this subject.

Mrs Austin: Yes.

The Chairman: Thank you very much. The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1636.

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday 27 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, 27 September 1989

The committee met at 1010 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Chairman: Good morning and welcome to the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, particularly relating to the equity, accountability and adequacy of both operating and capital finances.

I am particularly pleased to welcome as our first presenter this morning the Toronto Board of Education. That is from a personal perspective, since it is my very own board. Welcome to our committee. We are very much looking forward to your ideas on the financing of education. Mr Silipo, would you like to start by introducing your colleagues for the purpose of Hansard?

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Silipo: My name is Tony Silipo. I am the chair of the Toronto Board of Education. With me this morning are, on my right, Pam McConnell, the vice-chairman of the board, and, on my left, trustee Ann Vanstone, the chair of our education finance committee. Also with us are our director of education and soon-to-be director of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, Ned McKeown, and our associate director of operations, Bruce Snell. Our superintendent of information services, Linda Grayson, is also with us.

First of all, we appreciate the opportunity to make this presentation to the select committee. We think the process you are going through is a fairly important one and we are hopeful that some significant changes will come out of this process.

Our central point as a board is clear and unequivocal: You cannot separate the question of financing education from the issue of quality programs without destroying the very fabric of public education. We are shocked by the alarming erosion of education tax dollars through unilateral budgetary changes at the federal and provincial levels, which will seriously undermine the quality of educational programs for all children.

For too long local boards, local property taxpayers and parents have quietly worried about this trend. The time for action is now. To this

end, the Toronto Board of Education will be holding meetings across the city with parents and taxpayers to bring this issue to their attention and to develop an action plan. We believe our children's future depends on it.

We want to touch a little on the goals and objectives of education. As we move towards the year 2,000 and beyond, the pace of change will likely accelerate and the fallout from policies like free trade will become clearer as the manufacturing sector shrinks and the service- and information-intensive sectors expand. In a world of multiple options where decisions will be ever more dependent on the ability to synthesize, analyse and interpret ever-increasing amounts of data, all our students will need, more than ever before, the critical thinking and analytical skills that our board believes are central to quality educational programs.

Like the Premier's Council, we believe that investing in people is a matter of aiming for excellence in all stages of education. Elementary and secondary school education are particularly critical, because this is the period when children and young adults acquire the skills upon which they will later build. Few would disagree with Radwanski's assertion that:

"Education does not automatically result from warehousing young people in schools for any given number of years. That's merely schooling. Education, in the real sense that is vital to our society and to individuals...can only be discussed meaningfully in terms of outcomes—in terms, that is, of the actual knowledge and skills acquired by students during the time they spend in schools."

These outcomes have implications that are central to the quality of the social, economic and political fabric of our society. Indeed, democracy itself is increasingly dependent on an education population that is able to judge the quality of decision-making on both moral and technical grounds and that will hold its leaders accountable. The ultimate objective, we believe, is to assist "each student to develop his/her potential as an individual and as a contributing responsible member of society who will think clearly, feel deeply and act wisely," as is stated in OSIS. At the heart of this development is the quality of the encounter between the teacher and the learner.

Quality programs and committed staff are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for excellence. Parental involvement is absolutely vital. In our school communities, more than 50 languages are spoken and we know that we must communicate in at least eight languages, plus English, if we are to create and maintain partnerships with parents. These partnerships are critical inasmuch as they create ways in which parents and school staff can work together in the best interests of all our students. We know that parental involvement is a key factor in ensuring successful school outcomes for students.

Our board has initiated a number of innovative programs over the years that have served our students well and that have addressed areas of special needs. While it is not possible to discuss all of them, there are three areas in particular that will be drawn to your attention: streaming, standards of student achievement and the needs of English-as-a-second-language students.

Mrs McConnell: Streaming: Central to our board's philosophy is the commitment to the equality of educational opportunity. Our Every Secondary Student Survey reveals that streaming elementary students on the basis of their academic outcomes into basic, general and advanced programs too often reflects the existing biases in our society around gender, class and race. The elimination of this kind of streaming will not be easy, because it challenges fundamental values and assumptions that have largely been unquestioned by our society.

The process, however, has begun at the Toronto board with the establishment of a nonstreamed project secondary school that will admit its first grade 9 students in September 1990. The establishment of the project school requires an enormous commitment of resources so that the appropriate curriculum is developed and so that staff are given sufficient support and training to deal effectively with mixed ability groupings.

Nonstreaming is not a simple stroke-of-the-pen change. It is a fundamental change and one that requires commitment and significant resources over a long period of time. We note with interest that the ministry is committed to the introduction of a nonstreamed grade 9 by 1991. This may well provide an opportunity for co-operation, collaboration and perhaps even some funding from the ministry.

Standard of student achievement: our benchmark program: Later this school year we will be providing information to parents about the standards of achievement of the student popula-

tion of the Toronto board in grades 3 and 6. These standards will give parents a clear idea of how students do on a variety of tasks which are based on objectives established by the board and by the Ministry of Education. This initiative avoids the pitfalls inherent in standardized tests while giving parents and educators a reliable benchmark against which to measure individual performance. The development of this approach and the provision of such information is part of our board's commitment to the principle that parents are entitled to have their children's achievements determined in relation to system-wide standards.

The development of these standards of student achievement has required almost three years of research, testing, assessment, analysis and synthesis. The time commitment and financial investment have been significant, but we are confident that this program will have a positive impact on classroom teaching and learning strategies for the years to come.

English-as-a-second-language students: There are significant program challenges posed by the newly arrived students from countries around the world and, more particularly, the unique social and educational needs of our refugee children. Each year Metropolitan Toronto receives nearly 25 per cent of all the immigrants who choose Canada as their new home. Many of these families and their children become part of our school communities in the city of Toronto. Their needs are great. Meeting these needs requires changes "in school organization, in curriculum and materials, in staffing (hiring and retraining), in planning and community services."

When you examine the kinds of initiatives we have just described it is clear that the challenges facing educators and policymakers have never been greater. We cannot compromise the quality of our programs. Our communities, our parents and our students expect that we will provide quality programs that will enable all children to develop the thinking and analytical skills necessary to live and function effectively in the 21st century.

Our board is proud of its tradition of excellence in public education. We believe we have gone some way in ensuring equality of educational opportunity, but we know we have a distance to go and unless we continue to make a consistent commitment the gap will increase rather than narrow. We also know that a significant component in this commitment is the provision of adequate program funding.

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Mrs Vanstone: Now we would like to talk about the erosion of educational tax dollars in Toronto. The need for a system of educational financing that is both fair and predictable has never been greater. What we have instead is unprecedented uncertainty and the systematic erosion of program moneys by both the provincial and federal governments. Every single budget action of these governments during the last 18 months has, without exception, increased the cost of education and has increased the share of these costs borne by the local property taxpayer.

Consider that the provincial government operating grants for public education in Metropolitan Toronto are now zero. You will see the graph from 1981 to 1989 on page 7.

During the same nine-year period from 1981 to 1989 inclusive, the statistical residential mill rate for public education in Metropolitan Toronto has increased from 96.54 to 187.82 for a percentage increase of 94.55 per cent for local ratepayers.

As local taxpayers ourselves, we are experiencing the impact of these actions and we are starting to see in some area municipalities the first signs of real anger directed towards school boards because of the resulting mill rate increases; nor is there any evidence that a period of remission lies ahead. The long-term implications of the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment, for example, may well prove to be catastrophic. That is why we will watch the phase-in with attention to see whether our concerns are well founded. The ambiguity around the implications of pooling is exacerbated by provincial actions in other spheres.

Significant provincial initiatives, such as all-day kindergartens and smaller class size, all cost additional money. How can boards plan for the future when the province mandates change without consultation and without any clear commitment to fund these changes? You cannot ignore the issue of accountability that arises when local boards are saddled with the cost burden of implementing such provincially mandated initiatives.

There is, in addition, a wide variety of provincial legislation that in principle we also support, such as pay equity, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989, workplace hazardous materials information system, etc., that cost a significant amount of money to implement effectively. The money must come from existing funds, funds that in past

times would have supported classroom programs.

One of the many disconcerting elements of the recent provincial budget was the establishment, again without consultation, of the one per cent payroll levy to replace OHIP premiums. Once again, the Toronto board is placed in the position where monies required for educational programs may have to be used to finance other provincial priorities. This reality underscores the hypocrisy of the Premier's Council report when it laments that "the education system is not delivering value for the money it receives."

This position is not dissimilar from that of Prime Minister Mulroney, whose government has increased unemployment insurance premiums by 15 per cent and imposed a one per cent commodity tax on all supplies, including pencils, pens, paper, books, building materials, etc., to say nothing of the uncertainty around the impact of the proposed goods and services tax which threatens to siphon ever larger sums away from the classroom. The Prime Minister apparently sees no contradiction in publicly proclaiming that improvements to public education are central to his vision for Canada and at the same time making it painfully clear that the "urgent need for improvements...would not be solved with money from the federal government, urging instead that more study and more private-sector effort be put into problems."

While federal and provincial politicians bleat about the apparent deficiencies in education, they have no shame about devising schemes that will divert local tax money away from education, nor do the actions of any such politicians reflect what taxpayers are saying. A recent Environics poll indicated that in terms of spending, 46 per cent of those polled in Metropolitan Toronto felt that more tax dollars should go to education, while only three per cent thought that less money should be spent on education.

Mr Silipo: I would like to touch on the area of capital funding, as well.

Program needs obviously have a significant impact on the kind of student spaces required in our buildings. The fact is that we are now required to have more classes for fewer students. As we pointed out to the Crombie commission when we addressed this issue in some detail:

"During the past decade new program needs, emphasis on special education, heritage languages, the education of immigrant students, French immersion, Ministry of Education mandated smaller class size and full-day senior kindergartens have changed the design capacities of our

schools dramatically. The effective capacity of a school has been reduced by an average of 30 per cent. In other words, our 100-school elementary system has now become equivalent to a 70-school system, in terms of the number of students that can be accommodated."

Our board has endorsed the position stated in the green paper, *Financing Growth-Related Capital Needs*, that additional funds must be found to help finance capital programs for school boards and that steps need to be taken to address the needed renovation of ageing school capital facilities.

The Toronto board is confronted with the urgent need for significant capital funding in the next decade because of major housing redevelopment projects proposed for the central area of the city and because of the critical necessity of renovating or replacing a number of ageing school buildings.

In light of these realities, the 1989 Ontario budget, indicating a change in policy in terms of the funding of capital projects, was a major disappointment. Instead of increasing the average rate of provincial support for approved capital projects, it was reduced from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. In effect, this shifts more of the burden to the local taxpayer. In Metropolitan Toronto, this means that our grant rate for capital projects, which was approximately 37.5 per cent, will now be around 30 per cent. We agree with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association statement that, "This policy change is another unwelcome example of the provincial government offloading its responsibilities on to local revenue sources."

In conclusion, we would like to say that it is clear that the expenditure per pupil by school boards has increased at a much faster rate than the provincial grants for basic education funding. As a result, 90 per cent of the school boards in Ontario exceed the grant ceilings. Every dollar spent above the grant ceiling cost formula by school boards is borne 100 per cent by local property taxpayers. It is high time that the province acknowledge the real cost of providing quality education to our children. Part of this recognition should include a commitment by the province to cover 60 per cent of the real costs of educating each child in Ontario.

The Toronto board is strongly committed to ensuring quality of educational opportunity to all students and to eliminating traditional biases around gender, class and ethnicity. We will not stand idly by while the province or any other level of government erodes our tax base and

threatens the very foundation of public education. We believe that Toronto schools make the difference and we will exercise our power and our influence to ensure that other levels of government do not hinder our ability to achieve our objective of providing quality programs to students of all ages in our city. To do otherwise would be to betray the trust inherent in our role as elected representatives.

The Chairman: We have 11 or 12 minutes for questions.

Mr Reycraft: I have three or four questions, if I may. I do not think they will take a lot of time.

I am sure everybody on this committee is going to be extremely interested in your non-streamed project. The ministry's decision, I believe, was based on a recommendation from this committee last year. One of the things I am interested in is the selection of students for that nonstream school. I realize you are still a year away from implementation and you may not have finalized all of these arrangements, but have you made a decision on how you will select students for the school?

Mr Silipo: We will in effect not be selecting in terms of clearly identifying which students ought to go to the school. What we will be doing is putting together some information that will go out to students across the system that will provide information to them about the school. It will be left completely open—those are the current plans—in terms of which students ought to go into the school. So we will not be going and saying there will be any kind of strict selection process to sort of channel students into that school.

I would invite the director or any others to comment.

Dr McKeown: We have a long-standing history of having open attendance and open enrolment across the system. We are blessed with a good system of public transportation and many of our students, nearly 20 per cent actually, go to schools that are not their neighbourhood schools. Well, we are usually blessed with a good system of public transportation.

What we will be doing is explaining the opportunity that this new initiative of the Toronto board offers to students and to their parents. We believe the important thing we have to do is to be sure that people understand that opportunity and what it is they will be getting. We believe that once that is done, there will be sufficient students who will opt to attend the school.

Mr Reycraft: The reason I asked is that there was a suggestion at one point in the committee's considerations a year ago that the nonstream project would include only students who would likely have taken a general or advanced-level course, that it would not be available to those who would be taking basic-level courses. But from what you have said, I think it is safe to assume that we can expect to see some students who would have selected courses from all three levels in your project.

Mr Silipo: That is right.

Mr Reycraft: I am interested in your concern about the elimination of OHIP premiums and the cost implication for the board. Have you been able to make any assessment yet of what the dollar implication will be?

Mr Silipo: Yes, I think there were some figures. I do not know whether we have the figures specifically for Toronto, but there were some figures that we presented last week in the Metropolitan Toronto School Board's brief that gave you additional costs.

Dr McKeown: Could I suggest that for the taxpayers, rather than the dollar amount, the best translation is a mill rate increase. We estimate that across Metropolitan Toronto the increase in the Metro-wide mill rate directly attributable to the payroll tax to replace OHIP premiums will be nearly a mill and a half. That is the way the local taxpayer looks at it, not the millions that it represents, but "It's a mill and a half on my taxes."

Mr Reycraft: Thank you. I am no longer a full-time member of this committee, and this week is the first time I have been on the committee for these hearings, so I was not present when that presentation was made last week.

The last question deals with the overall spending levels. Trustees in the part of the province that I live in, southwestern Ontario, are always amazed to learn of your spending levels vis-à-vis their own. The difference at the secondary level, I think, is now approximately \$2,000 per student. I understand some of the demands and pressures that are placed on your board that do not have to be faced by those in southwestern Ontario, but I guess I am interested in your reaction to questions about the higher level of spending and how it is justified.

Mr Silipo: It is difficult for us to judge what other boards are doing or ought to be doing. Certainly, the high level of spending, as you put it, is for us, in our determination, simply what is

necessary to maintain the system that is there and to respond to all of the needs. I would probably start with the fact that a large chunk of that, of course—of any school board budget—goes towards salaries. I think that is one area that needs to be looked at as well; that maybe the comparative salaries of teachers and other employees might be different because it is generally more expensive to live in Metro Toronto than in other parts of the province.

In addition to that, on the program level, there are, of course, a number of particular needs that we have in a city like Toronto that perhaps other boards do not have or that perhaps other boards have and may not be responding to in the same way. I am not going to go too far beyond that in terms of, as I say, making judgement on what other boards are doing.

Dr McKeown: If I could just add a bit, the salary costs are the biggest determinant of that difference. We have in Metro Toronto just completed a two-year agreement with our secondary school teachers that calls for raises of 6.6 per cent in each of the two years. We look on the 7-and-7 situations that civil servants at the municipal level and the Toronto Transit Commission and so on are getting in Metro Toronto as very good settlements. When we talk to our colleagues in other parts of the province, including southwestern Ontario, they just throw up their hands and wonder what we are doing putting forward such rich settlements.

So I think, when you put that together with the fact that the news yesterday talked about businesses moving out of Metro or deciding not to expand because the costs were so high, and look at a school system that cannot move its schools out of Metro to take advantage of those lower costs and at the fact that over 80 per cent of our budget is salaries, people, that is the big difference for us, the salary differentials. A percentage point on Toronto board salaries is a lot of money.

Mr Reycraft: Do you know where your teachers rank with others in the province in terms of salaries?

Dr McKeown: We essentially have been, with the large boards in the province, somewhere in the top three or four. We are not higher or lower. The differentials are not very great. It depends as well on whether it is average. An average does not mean too much, because if you have a lot of new teachers obviously the average will be lower. The Ottawa board and the Toronto metropolitan area boards tend to be about the highest.

Mr Daigeler: Those fat cats, eh?

Mrs O'Neill: Why are you looking at me, Ned?

Dr McKeown: My eyes just cast around the committee, and there you were.

Mr Jackson: But that is the federal civil servants.

Mr Silipo: I have one brief comment. So comparing the salaries again, because we seem to have a lot of teachers who have been with us for a number of years, then the costs on a per-teacher basis are much higher than they might otherwise be.

Dr McKeown: Could I add just one more thing? We have a lot more support staff out there: the psychologists, the social workers, the school community people and the educational assistants in kindergartens, where we have a real need for a second adult who speaks English and frequently speaks the language of the majority of the children in the classroom. These are costs and they are significant costs. The day care is one thing we have not mentioned. We have more than 100 day care programs in our schools and anybody who believes that that does not cost money, even though legally school boards cannot provide money—it does cost money, primarily in staff time.

The Chairman: Just before we go to Mr Mahoney, for programmatic differences between Metro and the rest of the province, I assume the English-as-a-second-language program would be quite a high expense.

Dr McKeown: Yes.

The Chairman: And also the diverse needs for our special-needs children as far as special education would also be quite high.

Dr McKeown: More than half the children at Sunny View school in the north end of the city, which is a school for exceptional children with physical handicaps, come from families who moved to Metro Toronto to avail themselves of that kind of educational program.

The Chairman: And I guess, in addition to that, you have all these so-called pilot projects, but cutting-edge innovations such as the unstreamed school and that, in addition, would compound it.

Dr McKeown: That is right.

Mrs Vanstone: We also have a lot of adult literacy programs in Metro Toronto, especially in the city of Toronto, that some boards farther away from this kind of area would not have.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mrs Vanstone. We have Mr Mahoney, Mr Morin-Strom, Mr Furlong and Mr Jackson and we have three minutes.

Mr Mahoney: In the interests of allowing my colleagues to speak, I will limit my question to the one on lot levies. You have identified the reduction in capital grants from 75 to 60 per cent, but you did not mention your board's position or your analysis of what the lot levy program might do. Recognizing that the reduction to 60 per cent translates into a broader base and an increased amount of dollars generated, whether it is generated by way of a provincial grant or by way of the lot levy collection, is a topic of perhaps another discussion, but more dollars generated for capital purposes. Have you done an analysis of that from your board's perspective to see what kind of capital dollars you might generate and what you might accomplish?

Mr Silipo: No, we have not, but that is being done at the Metro school board level. I just want to be clear, because we were here not too long ago making our position on the lot levy proposal quite clear. While we agreed with the need for additional capital funds to be found, we do not, as a board, support the lot levy proposal that has come forward, because we think it will have a number of negative repercussions, among them the increase in the cost of housing. That will have, we think, a negative effect on our neighbourhoods in terms of forcing people to have to look at where they settle, and likely, in many cases, it will not be within the city of Toronto.

Mr Mahoney: Perhaps the debate on the lot levy issue is more appropriate at the standing committee on finance and economic affairs or at other levels, but clearly the reference to the 60 per cent reduction is tied to what the government is putting forth as an offsetting increase in availability of dollars. Whether you support it or not, that is the intent of it.

Mr Silipo: Yes, that is fine but, putting our objection aside, we would have to see some significant changes at the provincial level in terms of any kind of capital funding. Even under the present system, the amount of money that is flowed to Metro Toronto, let alone the Toronto board, in the last number of years has been minimal, if not nonexistent. Certainly with this new proposal we are not expecting, unless there are some changes that we are not aware of, any great amounts of money flowing to us.

Mr Mahoney: I will pass to the other members and forgo my other questions at this time.

Mr Morin-Strom: It seems to me, in terms of provincial initiatives with respect to financing, two of them that you had not addressed which are key to the government's plans are the issues of lot levies and pooling. I am pleased that Mr Mahoney has brought up the issue of lot levies, which you have testified at great length about at the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. I appreciate that.

However, the other issue then would be pooling of property tax base. I do not see a specific reference to your position on pooling in this presentation, although that is obviously critical to financing of school boards in Toronto and across the province. I wonder if you could clarify your position on pooling.

Mr Silipo: Sure. We do not go into it in great detail. We do, at the top of page 8, mention that we feel that the long-term implications will be fairly serious: "catastrophic" is the term we use. We did not go into it in any greater detail because, again, it is one of the things that we joined with our colleagues across Metro in our presentation to the committee last week and in that brief there is a much more detailed explanation. But certainly we are opposed to the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment.

I suppose we ought to take some relief from the fact that rather than pooling across the province, we ended up with pooling within Metro Toronto. That is about the only relief that we can take from that. We are somewhat sceptical that over the next few years we will be compensated—that may not be the best word—for the kind of effect that it will have.

There is some indication that there will be grants flowing to the boards in Metro to offset any loss in the shift of money, because of pooling, from the public to separate school boards. Certainly if that happens for the six years, then that is fine; at least there will not be any more negative impact. But, again, our questions would be, first of all, will that happen for the six years and, second, what about beyond the six years.

Again, it just goes to the whole question of the funding of education and the kind of commitment that the provincial government has to the funding of education when the government has allowed a situation to develop to the point where there are no funds being provided for the Metro Toronto

area for public education and all the money is coming from local property taxes.

Dr McKeown: Could I add just one brief thing as a staff person, if I may? I will believe that we will be compensated when I actually have the government's cheque in my hands. My concern is that what will happen is that in the great wash of education financing that occurs annually, somehow it will be discovered that it will be used to offset the negative grants which are apparently lurking around every corner, as far as Metro Toronto is concerned.

In terms of actually getting our hands on real dollars, there will not be anything. What we are most worried about, and the reason we use the word "catastrophic," is that the chairman of this committee talked about us being at the leading edge; the initiatives that we have put forth in day care, affirmative action, race relations and things of that nature—all-day senior kindergartens, by the way, many years ago—that money comes from the topping up that we get. If we lose that topping up because we have a fairly good assessment base, we are not going to have those initiatives. My question is, if we do not do it, who will?

Mr Morin-Strom: Do you have any sympathy for the point of view that in the interests of regional disparities and fairness, particularly northern boards and rural boards feel that pooling only makes sense if it is on a province-wide basis?

Dr McKeown: We have a great deal of sympathy with the needs of other boards in the province. We do not want to deprive them of moneys they need to provide quality education. Our preference would be that that quality education not be provided with our money, but rather with provincial money.

Mr Furlong: I have just a very brief question and the information may already be available to the committee. I am wondering how much of your revenue comes from the industrial-commercial base and how much comes from the residential, just the percentages roughly.

Mrs Vanstone: In Metro Toronto, at least last year, it was 52 per cent that came from commercial, so it was 48 per cent from residential.

Mr Jackson: I know the Etobicoke board is one of the 13 boards that, even with the government's formula for levelling out the costs of pooling, still would show a shortfall. Are you one of those boards as well?

Mrs Vanstone: Yes, we think so.

Mr Jackson: Are you doing any tracking of conversion of industrial-commercial assessment to residential assessment and the way in which it is being treated? It strikes me that within Metro Toronto there are huge tracts of commercial property which are being converted to residential, low-income, subsidized purposes, and in the process, the lot levy benefits and also the assessment benefits are depreciated. I wonder if you are doing any tracking.

At lunch yesterday I went to the Etobicoke board to go over a few things, and that was one of the areas of concern. They have some very major tracts of land and, of course, when you do such high concentrations of residential, low-income, affordable housing, there is a high incidence of children, and therefore, the immediate demand for schools.

It strikes me that that is where you are getting caught in this, without being able to generate very much from the lot levy fund. The expectation is that you will fund from that fund to provide the schools in those areas, but clearly the cost will not allow it, given the land prices and construction costs in downtown Toronto.

Are you doing any tracking in that, or are you just waiting to see how bad the fallout is from those two pieces of legislation before you proceed?

Dr McKeown: I have a three-part response to Mr Jackson's questions. The first one is that an individual board, a part of the Metro federation such as Etobicoke, Toronto, Scarborough, North York or what have you, is not a fiscal entity, so any tracking has to be done at the Metro level. The Metro-wide federation is one of those 13 boards, and the impact there could be very real.

The second thing is, we are really caught, and this ties together lot levies; it ties together market value assessment, which has not been mentioned here yet this morning; it ties together your concern about the kind of social housing that is being built and the fact that one of the things of which this board is most proud is our ability, with the city, to maintain family housing in the core. This is a city, unlike any other city in North America, that does not die at five o'clock in the afternoon, and that is a cost. The cost of keeping open our small downtown schools has been very heavy.

We have got ourselves into it at the Toronto board very much. We have, for the first time since the expansion days of 30 years ago, established a planning department. What that planning department does is spend most of its

time at endless meetings: at land use, at property development, looking at the railway lands in the territory, at the developments that spill over into the other members of the Metro federation. Yes, there is very much a concern, and the shift that may occur under pooling is also very much a concern when you see what might happen under market value assessment.

Just as a little aside, and I do not intend to refight Bill 127 this morning, but the discretionary levy was a little light and was overlooked when the pooling legislation was brought forward, and it is my understanding that that technical oversight is likely to be looked after this time around. But you are right, we are concerned about what is happening, very much so.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Jackson. Dr McKeown, maybe I can explain why the words "market value assessment" were not mentioned in this committee.

Dr McKeown: I will take it back if you want me to.

The Chairman: The chairperson tends to run amok when they are issued, and I think members of the committee are very tired of hearing me expound upon it, so they very carefully keep away from those words.

Dr McKeown: If I am invited back, I will not raise it again, I promise you.

The Chairman: Oh, please do. They are the ones who do not want to raise it. Thank you very much for your presentation today. It has been very helpful in letting members of the committee understand the situation in Metro and in Toronto. We appreciate your contribution to education in this province.

Dr McKeown: Thank you.

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The Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the subcommittee on capital and property review of the community liaison advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education. I am sorry there is no time left for your presentation. We used it all up on your title.

Mr Mahoney: I want to know what the letters are.

The Chairman: That is the SCOCAPROT-CLAC, etc. Mitchell Beer, I believe? Welcome to our committee.

Mr Jackson: I want to know why they do not have a bilingual one.

The Chairman: Yes, if you want to give that to us in French as well, we will really have a mouthful. Mr Beer, welcome to our committee.

We have allocated 30 minutes of presentation time to you, and we hope at least part of that will be reserved for members' questions. Please begin whenever you are ready.

COMMUNITY LIAISON ADVISORY
COMMITTEE OF THE OTTAWA
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr M. Beer: Thank you for keeping the name of our committee outside my time. I was afraid that in explaining how we got to be this particular subcommittee, I would use up my half-hour and more, which is not atypical.

On behalf of all the members of our committee, I would like to thank you first of all for the opportunity to bring a community perspective to your deliberations on school finance. In our experience as parent volunteers and school-community advocates, it has become abundantly clear that the concerns for quality education in up-to-date school facilities that make so much sense on the ground seem to get lost or forgotten once the discussion is carried to the provincial or even the board level. We believe these concerns must be front and centre in your efforts to build greater fairness and equity into the province's framework for school finance.

Our group formed last December for the purpose of organizing a province-wide conference on school renovation funding. The conference took place in Ottawa on 31 March and 1 April of this year. Most organizing committee members came from older schools in the Ottawa Board of Education's elementary panel, but parents from every corner of the OBE came forward to make the conference a resounding success. Close to 100 parents, trustees and school officials and teachers from almost two dozen boards shared perspectives and ideas on the scope of the renovation challenge.

One of the most important things we learned, and this goes for organizers and participants alike, was that we were not alone in our concern that the province's capital funding policy is bad news for older schools, small schools and the core-area boards where they are most likely to be found. We also realized that one conference would not solve the problem so we are now constituted as a permanent subcommittee of the OBE's community liaison advisory committee which, parenthetically, I gather is the only or one of the very few community advisory committees to have been established by any Ontario school board to systematically bring community concerns and views to the attention of school boards. We have three representatives from the elemen-

tary panel, including myself, three representatives from the high school panel, two community members at large and one member from the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Trade.

I have provided the committee clerk with a copy of the proceedings that were produced following our conference. I would like to elaborate very briefly on some of the lessons we learned in organizing the event.

First, renovations must be funded on an equal footing with new pupil places. The ministry's director of school business and finance arrived at the conference with photos of overcrowded schools in high-growth areas as if to ask how boards with older schools could be so demanding. At the closing plenary, participants rejected this arbitrary and ultimately short-sighted trade-off and passed a resolution urging that equal priority be accorded to renovations and new pupil places.

We do not for a moment dispute that new construction is urgently needed in some boards. But this understanding does not negate or diminish the need for major renovation programs that most core-area boards cannot afford without substantial provincial support.

Second, the province's approach to equity in school finance places undue and disproportionate stress on inner-city boards with ageing facilities. The province's current approach to school finance is couched in the language of equity and fairness, but there is a huge gap unfortunately between language and reality. In Ottawa, equity means that provincial grants cover only three per cent of the board's budget compared to a 42.7 per cent average across Ontario and the government's election promise of 60 per cent.

The ministry claims the Ottawa board is a rich board that should either raise taxes or cut programs, even though many of the so-called extra programs in the OBE are the same innovations that are now mandated in the recent throne speech.

We agree with the recent statement of the provincial Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon) to the effect that huge public investment is at risk because of a lack of attention to school renovations, but we would add the observation that no board can afford to undertake a major renovation program without provincial support.

By disregarding this reality, the ministry essentially favours growth boards over those with ageing core-area facilities. By devolving more of the financial burden to the local level, the ministry sets up a choice between program cuts and school closures on the one hand, or major tax

increases on the other. At the level of government where programs are most community-specific, taxation is most regressive and elected officials are arguably most directly vulnerable to a ratepayer revolt.

We find it ironic that the former Minister of Education advised local boards to go into debt to finance needed capital projects when much of the impetus for this devolution of responsibility can be traced to senior governments' efforts to cut their own deficits. At the very least, this shift in financing must be accompanied by measures to allow more equitable forms of local taxation to replace property taxes and the more recent move towards lot levies.

Third, the province's present approach to capital funding often leaves local boards with no choice but to close older, smaller schools, regardless of community needs or desires. I am very pleased that you heard from Dianne Austin from the Provincial Save our Schools Coalition yesterday afternoon. She even spells her name right, Madam Chairman.

At our conference, Mrs Austin explained the impact of provincial funding policy on smaller schools. She described cases where boards have been forced to consolidate students in a single larger building, even though it would have been less expensive and more in line with community needs to renovate the existing community schools, as she indicated to you yesterday. She also cited overall statistics at our conference that linked capital funding policy to a trend towards larger school facilities at a time when some researchers are identifying small schools as one of the best options to encourage lifelong learning and reduce the dropout rate.

In the OBE, it is clear that classrooms in these smaller schools will be needed to meet the class size targets set out in the throne speech. Indeed, the board's preliminary analysis predicts a major shortfall of classrooms to meet the new provincial mandate for all-day kindergarten and the new staffing policy for grades 1 and 2.

Fourth, the renovation challenge will get worse before it gets better. At present, there are 17 elementary schools on the Ottawa board's renovation priority list. Little did we realize when we began our work that this represents the tip of a rather daunting iceberg. Schools across Ontario that were built in the boom years of the 1960s will soon be eligible for renovation, availability of funds notwithstanding.

Several speakers at the conference described structural problems in these newer old schools, arising in many cases from the use of construc-

tion materials or techniques that have since fallen into disrepute. From crumbling brickwork to massive condensation problems, these buildings are the next stage of a province-wide fiscal challenge that has already been estimated at \$4.5 billion or more.

A further dimension to this problem is the need for older buildings in core-area boards to incorporate the quality space that is included in the design specifications for new schools. Science labs and technology shops are a key priority at the secondary level, and all schools require proper outlets and wiring for a range of classroom equipment from computers to tape recorders to film projectors. A single electrical outlet located next to a sink may have been permissible in a 1920s building code, but would never be tolerated in a new facility in a growth board, nor should it be tolerated—in their schools or anybody else's.

Fifth, the renovation challenge must be addressed through co-operation, not confrontation. More and more parents are beginning to recognize that every child needs adequate, up-to-date school facilities as a prerequisite to effective learning. It does not matter whether they attend an old school or a new one, a larger school or a smaller one, in a growth board or a core area.

Ministry officials have suggested that every child should have a roof over his or her head before significant funding is considered for renovations. Once again, without denying the urgent need for new pupil places, we would suggest that the proverbial leaky roof deserves just as much attention. We are encouraged that the United Nations definition of homelessness includes not only a lack of shelter per se, but a lack of adequate shelter.

Sixth, this select committee can play a key role in addressing the renovation challenge. At the conference, participants briefly discussed a draft resolution asking the select committee to hold province-wide hearings on school renovation funding. Based on the model established by the Berger commission in the Northwest Territories, we considered recommending to you that intervenors or community advocates be funded to take a key role in the hearings.

In this connection, we were encouraged by the Ontario select committee on energy's use of its contract staff budget a couple of years ago to bring in expert views from a wider range than usual of community perspectives. This recommendation recognized that appropriate education cannot take place in school buildings that are

inadequate, that the educational innovations on which the province's future prosperity depends will hinge, in part, on sound infrastructure.

Indeed, your own recent report on year-round education will remain largely theoretical unless funding is provided to air-condition a sizeable number of schools, old and new, and once you do that, to bring the older ones up to today's building code standards.

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I would like to close, if I may, with a final comment on process and publicity. We missed your hearings in Ottawa because we only heard about them the previous Friday, and then only by chance. We were fortunate and are grateful that your schedule today could accommodate us, but we cannot help wondering about the school communities across the province that never had a chance to take part.

At the conference, we were strengthened in our belief that every member of the school community—parents, teachers and students as well as trustees, managers and province-wide organizations—have important and valid things to say about the educational system. We would urge you to work with local boards to publicize your meetings more extensively in future, to ensure the widest possible range of participation.

The volunteers on our committee decided to incur the cost of a trip to Toronto in the hope that your report on school finance might include some recognition of the need for provincial funding of local renovation programs. The need is urgent and is likely to become even more so in the foreseeable future. We thank you for your time and respectfully request your support.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Beer. Perhaps just before we go to Mr Daigeler who has a question or two for you, I will mention that we did advertise province-wide in every daily and weekly paper. It is unfortunate that in some cases people did not get notice. We do try our best.

Mr M. Beer: I did not mean to suggest otherwise.

The Chairman: Yes, but your point is well taken. If people do not know the hearings are occurring, it is very difficult for them to participate. We are glad you could make it down today.

Mr M. Beer: I would just like to say that the reason we included that reference in our text was that when we met as a subcommittee, we realized that about three or four of us had known there was a select committee travelling, but nobody knew when. We all found out at the very last minute.

Then, three hours later, we went to the community liaison advisory committee and again three or four people said, "My God, we knew they were coming, but they are gone."

Mr Mahoney: We're quick.

Mr M. Beer: Again, we realized that efforts had been made and we do not want to suggest otherwise, but a lot of people were missed.

The Chairman: For people who think that government moves slowly, here is an example where we are in and out before you discover we are really there.

Mr M. Beer: Just about.

The Chairman: I am very glad you did make the trip down and perhaps you could speak to our clerk afterwards about the possibility of reimbursement for expenses.

Mr Daigeler: First of all, thank you for taking part in an important process. You are obviously putting in a lot of work on a question that is very important for all of us. Let me ask you two questions. One is a bit general. I do not know whether you have had the opportunity yet—I think you are just starting out in life; you are quite young—but if you have bought a house or if you are planning to buy a house, would you purchase that house out of your savings or how would you proceed on that?

Mr M. Beer: We would probably scratch and save to find the minimum 25 or so per cent of capital that would be required as a down payment and the rest we would mortgage.

Mr Daigeler: A mortgage?

Mr M. Beer: Indeed.

Mr Daigeler: Well, if you do that, do you not think it would be fair for the school boards to do likewise? You see, in your brief with regard to the financing of the capital, you are implying that basically the province should pay for all the new facilities out of its current budget. Do you not think it is fair to put a mortgage before our new facilities, or even for the renovations of some of the older ones?

Mr M. Beer: With respect, sir, some boards are now in that position because of the lack of provincial support, but I think the same argument could be made and directed at the Ministry of Education. Certainly, any responsible board—I think our's is a leader in this respect—will institute a routine or preventive maintenance program to try to extend the life of existing capital stock, to extend the life of the buildings, basically. But at some point, those buildings are

going to need a major refit. They have been getting around it.

Mr Daigeler: But my point there is, do we finance that out of current revenues or do we put out debentures? I would like to ask you whether—you may not know this, but since there are representatives from the board here—you know the present percentage of the Ottawa board budget that currently goes to debentures. I know, for example, that in the Carleton board, in the area I represent, it is practically minimal. They hardly have any debentures even though it is a very growing board.

Mr M. Beer: I am not familiar with the exact statistics. I do know that the Ottawa board, if I am not mistaken—trustee Marjorie Loughrey please correct me if I am off base here—has been retiring a number of debentures in recent years and is actively considering new debentures for renovations or new construction.

But we would most emphatically argue that the province has a responsibility in this area as well. The statistics presented yesterday by Dianne Austin indicated the vast bulk of the \$300 million in new funding has been allocated to new pupil places. I think the same argument applies to renovation. We are simply asking for equal treatment so that both priorities are considered at the same time.

Mr Jackson: Thank you, Mr Beer, for your brief. It is an area we are not getting a lot of feedback on, so the fact that you have given us the minutes of your conference and the summary will be very helpful to us.

I want to ask you a bit about Dianne Austin's thesis yesterday, which you sort of hint at; that is, the notion that school boards may from time to time pursue newer schools, pass over renovations and actually raze a building, tear it down, and then refer that student population to a newer school because of the way the grants are structured.

Since that presentation, I have made a couple of calls and found a board right in the middle of that. That really is their rationale, that they cannot get renovations money, so they are prepared to tear down a high school. You can imagine the numbers we are talking about here. It is frightening. It was the subject of a public meeting last night where there were about 500 people. The community is starting to ask some serious questions about why a school board would tear down a building and then rebuild one a couple of blocks away.

Can you comment, either from the Ottawa perspective if that was part of the genesis of your

organization, or if it had to do with the small community school movement? I am trying to get a sense if we are moving away from the desire to protect a small community school and therefore demand the dollars for renovation versus some economic analysis that indicates it is a wiser use of taxpayers' total dollars to renovate in many more circumstances than we are than it is to rush out and rebuild brand-new schools that, quite frankly, in the case I was looking into, are overbuilt for the capacity of their needs.

Mr M. Beer: What we have learned since we began our work is that both arguments are valid and require serious consideration. With regard to Dianne Austin's thesis concerning the structure of capital grants, it certainly rings true that a lot of applications for renovation funding have basically been dismissed.

At the conference, it was suggested that if you are refused, you should just keep trying, and in fact, if I remember correctly, a ministry representative indicated that not very many requests for renovation had been coming forward recently. I think it is fairly easy to understand that if you continually receive negative reinforcement for something you are doing, you will try to find an easier path; you will try to find the path of least resistance. I think that is what boards have had to do because of the structure of the capital grants.

Second, with regard to small schools, there is a very fascinating body of literature identifying the benefits of small schools, particularly in the early years, in many cases carrying through as well. At the conference, we were very pleased that became a major part of the discussion.

I can tell you that my child is in a school that was built in 1905. It was last extended to be a bit larger in the early 1950s, I believe. We have an enrolment of between 140 and 150 this year, which is appropriate for a nine-room school. It is not that we are underutilized. There is a preschool attached as well. It is a multi-use facility. It is a small school with the ability to pay attention to each individual child to the extent that every individual child deserves. It is wonderful. I am convinced there will be statistics down the road indicating that this type of foundation in the early years will lead to a dramatic reduction in the drop-out rate in years ahead.

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Mr Jackson: My final question has been alluded to, the notion of debenturing renovation costs. Are you familiar with the fact that four years ago the government developed a proposal to save the tired and ageing buildings at our

post-secondary institutions? The government clearly enunciated a philosophy of importance attached to saving those buildings and not rebuilding new buildings, and the funding was built on that premise. Do you not feel that if the government puts that kind of value on post-secondary institutions that it should at least put a similar kind of value on education for children?

Mr M. Beer: Certainly.

Mr Jackson: I was not leading you.

Mr M. Beer: I guess the one point I would make, as well, regarding debentures—

Mr Jackson: I think Mr Daigeler raised a great point. I just wanted to clarify it.

Mr M. Beer: Speaking from a community perspective to the question of whether the province or boards should be covering the cost of renovations, I dare to suspect that if the province were to make the first move to make any kind of encouraging noises, or better, to take any encouraging initiatives at all, a lot of boards would respond and realize that there is some interest and some support for renovations and join with the province to get the job done.

I think it is that kind of partnership that is needed, rather than the back-and-forth discussion. You can prove anything with statistics and so far, most of the energy seems to be directed at deciding who is responsible for not funding the work that is required. If both levels of government would just get down to it, communities would have the schools they need.

Mr Jackson: There is no question that there are times when we worry about whether the ministry is sending out signals or schools boards are sending signals to the ministry. To be fair to them, when I was a trustee for 10 years, I experienced the minor, by comparison, total dollar allocation for renovations and watched major renovations, actually, slipping from number three on the list down to number six and then down to number seven. I went through that whole period.

With the political pressure out in the community and the political realities of running provincial elections every four years in areas where there are no schools, I think that has tended to leave that agenda. I think this committee should look at perhaps discussing with the ministry a greater discipline in terms of a philosophy of saving older schools and not allowing the balance, for whatever reason, to tip in favour of all new schools versus the need to renovate and save schools.

Your comments are appreciated, and hopefully the committee will look at that point as to whether or not we should ask the government for a stronger philosophical stand. What is their policy with respect to retaining and saving those buildings that are in serious need of renovation? That is what you are doing. You are putting them at risk of saying, "You're no longer able to allow them to continue a school because they are unsafe," which is what we were hearing at the university level.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Beer, for coming all the way from Ottawa on one of Air Canada's finest, I am sure, to participate in our hearings today. As members of the committee have indicated, this is an area where we have not had a lot of input. We very much appreciate what you and Dianne Austin have provided for our committee's interests, concerns and recommendations.

Our next presentation will be the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Please come forward and be seated. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time. First of all, welcome to the committee. We hope part of that 30 minutes will be reserved for members' questions. We welcome you back, I should say, rather than just welcome, since we have found your contributions before to be very helpful. If you would begin by introducing yourself for the purposes of Hansard, you may begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Lafarga: My name is Ruth Lafarga. I am president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. I have with me the chair of the committee that worked on this presentation, Carol Parker, a trustee from the Carlton Board of Education; Penny Moss, who is executive director of our association, and Marie Pierce, director of policy. We also have in the audience our first vice-president, Ernie Checkeris from Sudbury; Nancy Bentley, a second vice-president, and other members of our organization.

We welcome the opportunity to present our views. I believe you have the presentation, but obviously we are not able to read it; it is quite extensive. But we do welcome the opportunity to present the views of OPSBA on the funding of education in Ontario.

We challenge the committee this morning to join with us in determining the provincial priority for education in Ontario. When I say "challenge,"

what do I mean? We ask you to join with us in establishing the long-term provincial policy objectives for education. Once we have those, we can make finance decisions which will reflect and support the goals and objectives for the school system. All too often the finance decisions dominate and dictate the kinds of schools we have. The provincial government's level of funding for public schools is constraining the contributions that education can make to the economic and social wellbeing of Ontario.

Currently, we find there is no public consensus on the role of education in our province or our society and there is no consensus on the level of education that should be available to ensure equality of opportunity. We must set the limits of what schools are expected to achieve. We believe that the future economic and social wellbeing of this province will depend on how well we provide for the developmental needs of our learners.

The Premier's Council report states that, "To compete effectively in a new knowledge-intensive global economy that relies primarily on human capital, excellence in educating our workforce is our single most important strategic weapon."

Policymakers have to determine the fiscal priority of education amid the many competing demands clamouring for their attention, and we are all very well aware that you have a great number of people clamouring for your attention. We want to confront the question today, is education an expense or an investment? OPSBA and its member boards claim categorically that it is an investment in the future of this province.

The general philosophy guiding the public education system has the following principles, and these are the basis on which the public education system functions:

It is a public education system that is universally accessible and offers educational opportunities to all learners irrespective of their ethnic, racial, cultural, social, economic status, age, individual exceptionality or religious preference. I find that has almost become a cliché and we mouth those words without really even thinking about what the true meaning of that is. But I think it is very important that we understand how important it is that when someone comes to our door we take them into our system. That is very, very key.

A second principle concerns what is taught in our system and how it is taught. This must be flexible, responsive and adaptive to the specific needs and the abilities of learners of all ages, not

just the young but increasingly the adults. Courses must meet provincially mandated curriculum standards, reflect the concerns of the local community and enhance the social, economic and cultural life of the province.

Our third principle is that public education is based on a shared responsibility and a co-operative process. It is shared by the family, by the individual, by the community and by society. This shared responsibility requires shared accountability.

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These are the bases that form the principles for our public education system. The 13 goals of education, which are on the back of our presentation, support and reflect those goals.

However, we believe that the provincial government has allowed the education financing system to fall well behind in meeting not only these fundamental necessities but also new requirements and expectations in core curriculum, technical and adult education and added responsibilities in the social, cultural and health-related fields.

When we talk about setting the educational agenda, as I alluded to at the beginning, I made the point that there is no public consensus on the role of education in Ontario. In addition to what we attempt to offer in our core curriculum, we have taken on social, cultural and health responsibilities. These were either formerly held by other ministries and funded by them or they have arisen because of the changes in society.

If we look at some of the social aspects that we have taken on, they include day care, adult education, junior kindergarten. Cultural impacts in the schools are multiculturalism, race relations, heritage language and English-as-a-second-language programs. Health aspects include our AIDS and drug education.

Provincially, programs have been added in an ad hoc way, driven by public opinion poll agenda setting. Decisions have been based on political expediency as opposed to educational reasons. We believe that we must raise the following questions before we add programs. Is the school system the best way to deliver programs? Can the system handle these initiatives? Are there adequate resources, both financial and human, in the short and the long term? Is there costly duplication of service? Is there only technical compliance or real change in outcomes?

We believe that the minister, with the super-ministry, has a real opportunity to facilitate collaboration to achieve cost-effective programs

that will be effective, comprehensive and provide maximum access.

Mrs Parker: The Ontario Public School Boards' Association believes that the development of any funding model must be based on the three principles that Ruth listed in our philosophy:

1. Equal opportunity for all students, keeping in mind that the public school system has to be universally accessible to all students.

2. Shared responsibility. The province legislates and boards deliver, therefore the financial responsibility should be shared according to that division.

3. Flexibility. Boards deliver what the province legislates, but boards also have to respond to local needs and local concerns, and any funding model must allow that flexibility.

OPSBA also believes that a funding model for education should provide for accountability by both the province and the boards. Finally, we believe that it should be easily understood.

A system of education finance cannot be developed unless there are clear goals and objectives. Therefore, before any funding model is developed, the province must establish what public education is expected to achieve. The establishment of a clearly defined level of program which all school boards must provide would make it much easier to develop a model of funding.

We believe that the grant ceilings, which depended on the establishment of a per-pupil amount for grant purposes, have now become floors as provincial funding has continued to decline. It is obvious these days that a community's wealth or lack of wealth determines whether its children have equal opportunity of education.

OPSBA believes that any funding model must be the result of a partnership between provincial and local governments, and this will depend on consultation with and recognition of the role of the public school board in its local community and its local needs. I will reiterate at this point that OPSBA is opposed to coterminous pooling of commercial and industrial assessment because it limits the ability of boards to respond to local needs.

Mrs Lafarga: There are just three particular components of funding that I would like to touch on very briefly.

The first is the program. Obviously, we could spend a great deal of time on this but I just want to suggest to the committee that any funding system must acknowledge the variety of programs and the different cost in providing programs. We are

very concerned that some of the high-cost programs are suffering as a result of restrictions in budgets.

In the capital area in the presentation that you have just heard has been very comprehensive. We certainly want to acknowledge the increased capital allocation and the innovative approaches to capital that we are seeing from the government. We have been particularly pleased that those boards that wish to pick up on the lot levies will have the opportunity to do that.

However, I really have to remind you that in 1988 there was \$1.39 billion of unmet capital needs in the province. We feel there are some aspects of the whole capital area that really need attention. The accommodation formula, quite frankly, is ridiculous. At 35 to 1, when we have mandated class sizes of 20 to 1, that is something that does need review.

Secondly, the funds are needed to maintain the existing stock and if I could just add one fact that I did not hear in the previous presentation, there are 1,000 schools in Ontario that are over 50 years old and, obviously, are in need of quite considerable upgrading.

We do oppose the cutback to the 60 per cent level of grant from 75 per cent. While boards may move to access lot levies, we will not see money from that for quite some time and yet that 60 per cent rate of grant will be effective in January 1990. Boards really are going to have hardship.

The third area we want to address is the school board as employer in talking about specific costs because education is a very labour-intensive workplace. Many things that happen in workplace legislation have quite a considerable impact on school board budgets: pay equity, health and safety, the employer health tax. These are some of the concerns that school boards are really struggling to deal with these additional costs. We would ask that when we are impacted by this that any grants for that should be in addition to the costs of the education program.

Mrs Parker: Finally, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association urges the government to do some long-range planning. We all have to do long-range planning and we feel that the government should do some long-range financial planning for education.

We are extremely concerned about the way new initiatives are announced. Even though these initiatives sometimes have money attached, it is usually only short-term money and the funds for those programs then get rolled into the basic grants and even if those grants are

increased, the increase does not cover the cost of providing the program. There are many examples of that.

Mrs Lafarga: I do not think it is necessary for me to read the recommendations that are there.

Mr Jackson: Put them on the record.

Mrs Lafarga: You would like me to put them into the record.

1. That provincial education policy must be a collaborative process which provides for the genuine participation of school boards and other partners in the definition of problems, the development of policy solutions, the identification of required resources and the implementation of new directions.

2. The government undertake an examination of the mandates of its formal educational systems with a view to enhancing educational opportunities in a cost-effective manner, such examination to be undertaken in collaboration with key partners in education, including educational consumers and representatives of the business community.

3. It be the fiscal responsibility of the provincial government to ensure that there is equal access to clearly defined level of education regardless of the wealth of the local community and that the per pupil cost of this level be determined in collaboration with the school boards.

4. The government move towards long-range planning with its partners in education and in the provision of financial support to schools.

5. The provincial government, in collaboration with representatives of school boards, develop a comprehensive capital investment strategy for the renewal of Ontario's 4,600 elementary and secondary schools.

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6. The costs incurred in the implementation of new legislation specific to the school boards' role as employer be funded in addition to per-pupil grants.

I would just like to say that the class of 2000 is already in our school system, so we really hope you will join with OPSBA in establishing education's priorities in the province and making sure that the social and economic future of the province is in good hands.

The Chairman: Thank you. We very much appreciate your presentation today.

Mr Mahoney: You have just made me feel old. The class of 2000 is already in the system.

Mr Furlong: You are old.

Mr Mahoney: I am old, but I am not short.

The Chairman: Hey!

Mr Mahoney: The over-ceiling issue is one we have heard all around the province, of course, 90 per cent of the boards spending over ceilings. As a provincial organization, do you have any advice on how we set ceilings? Do we simply write a blank cheque? Do we establish criteria? I have asked a number of presenters if they could tell me what was driving their over-ceiling in their particular board and frankly have not really received definitive answers to that anywhere. Recognizing that some people have said programs and some people have said staffing costs, I have really tried to get a handle on what specifically drives over-ceiling costs in various parts of the province. Can you help us in advising the ministry on how they should set a reasonable ceiling? Should there be a ceiling at all? Should it just be open-ended?

Mrs Lafarga: I believe our whole presentation is that we feel the province should establish a level of education that should be available right across the province. Obviously that will decide what the level of funding should be. I do not think we should look at establishing a level of funding and then say, "Make your program fit that." What we have to establish is what we want for education in this province and then work out what our level of funding is going to be.

I think that when you ask boards that question, probably all of those answers are right. There are many different components that influence what the ceilings are for boards. Obviously boards are in the position to respond to their local communities for the education services they provide. It is not only all of those things, but it is provincial government initiatives too, and there are many components to it.

Mr Mahoney: I guess when you take into account the accountability of locally elected trustees who want to set their programs in response to the needs of their particular community, it does become difficult to make everyone happy with a ceiling level of programs, whether it is a ceiling level of funding or not. Do you establish that level of program and then say, "Sorry, you cannot do anything more even though your local community wants that"?

Mrs Lafarga: We would suggest that those ceilings, by the way, are floors right now. I think that is a local political decision you make with your taxpayers: What do we want in the local education system and how much are we prepared to fund that system? If you look at the whole

thrust of our paper today, we are asking the provincial government to decide if education is an expense, which we hear too often, or an investment. I think we have to keep coming back to looking at it as an investment in the future. There have been many studies to show that making that investment will pay off in the future, because our citizens who have a better level of education will be less strain on our social programs, health and those things.

Mr Mahoney: I wrote down that it is an expensive investment with a high rate of return. Really what you are saying then is that there will always be over-ceiling expenditures, regardless of where you set the ceiling, because it will be up to the local board to make that decision.

Mrs Lafarga: What I think is very important, though, is that we decide on a level that will provide—

Mr Mahoney: Basic minimums.

Mrs Lafarga: I do not want to use the term “basic minimums.” I do not think we want to settle for basic minimums in Ontario. I think we want a level of education that we are very satisfied with and that is what we have to provide.

Mr Mahoney: I think we can play games with words too. A basic minimum simply means a platform, or you could call it an expectation rather than a basic minimum, but I think we all know what we are referring to.

You said that there is \$1.39 billion in capital programs that were not funded. Have you, as a provincial association, analysed how much of that \$1.39 billion would have been taken care of had lot levies been up and running, notwithstanding the fact that there is a phase-in period required? Has anyone looked at that?

Mrs Lafarga: No. We have not been able to get that sort of information yet.

Mr Mahoney: Just one final question. Can you tell me how much your presentation cost?

Mrs Lafarga: No, I cannot.

Mr Mahoney: The committee would perhaps be interested in receiving that.

Mr Furlong: Welcome to the committee and thank you for the brief. I would like to follow up a bit on what Mr Mahoney was talking about. We have heard a lot of criticism over the last little bit that the programs are being imposed on school boards and all these programs have costs and the costs end up being borne by the local taxpayer. Earlier this morning we had a brief from the Toronto Board of Education. They, at least in the

capital funding section, indicated that in terms of availability schools have gone from 100 per cent schools to 70 per cent schools as a result of new programs.

I am wondering if your association has data or statistics to indicate how much those new programs have actually cost the local board. I am talking not only of capital but of operating costs, because it strikes me that if you are saying that a lot of that is the over-ceiling expenditure, then I would like to know how much of that is. How much is the provincial government responsible for that? I find all too often that what is happening is that it is easy to blame somebody else. You blame us, we blame the feds and it gets to be a vicious circle.

What I would like to really know is: How much is the local trustee responsible for in that overexpenditure? In other areas, health and community services, we talk about providing funds at six or four or whatever the percentage is, and we say to organizations, “You must live within that.” These organizations, fortunately or unfortunately, depending on where you sit, do not have the ability to tax so they live within it.

I am wondering here whether we are we getting to a point where the burden on the local taxpayer has become so tremendous as a result of actions by trustees and so on, yet who do they blame for that? It is easy to say, “Blame the provincial government because its share of the provincial budget is declining.” Are the trustees to blame? Are the boards to blame? Who is it?

Mrs Lafarga: I think you have asked two aspects of a question there. You have asked about the costs that go in when we implement new programs, and they are very variable for school boards. For some programs, when they are introducing junior kindergarten, for instance, they will have to put the physical facilities on to the schools. The transportation costs vary for each board. If you are employing a number of younger teachers who are moving through the grid you have your increment factor, so there are many factors that contribute to the costs of implementing the various programs, if I just take that one.

I do not believe we have anything that would give us an indication of what that would cost for specific boards. I think you would have to ask if boards have done that sort of analysis. We would actually be very pleased to have the provincial government develop a funding model where we could see what programs cost. We do not really have a good model that would enable us to cost

out specific programs, so we think that would be something you may want to recommend.

I do not think it really serves the purpose very well. I think the public just gets very confused, if we are blaming each other. I think that is what we do have to move away from. We have to have this collaborative approach so that we are making decisions that are really supported by everyone in our community. I do not want to come here and blame. I want to say: "These are some of the problems. How can we best address them so that we are best serving the needs in the community?"

1140

Mr Jackson: On that point, I think it was two weeks ago that the ministry contacted various shareholders to announce that it was planning to make some changes to financing of education and the elimination of the distinction between the two panels.

On that point of accountability which you were just referring to Mr Furlong, has your association had time to reflect on that suggestion, and do you wish to share with this committee your thoughts on the elimination of the distinction between elementary and secondary for reporting purposes?

Mrs Lafarga: We have not taken a position on that as an association at this stage.

Ms Moss: We certainly have not, but the initial general response is one that says, at least from the officials' point of view, that it will save considerably on the current running of dual accounting systems, one per panel in school systems.

Mr Jackson: I understand the rationale. I am going back to Mrs Lafarga's point a few moments ago which dealt with the notion of accountability for program loading on school boards. It strikes me that the need for accountability should not always be focused on trustees, but also on the provincial government. There is a whole list of examples, even in the last two years, of programs that were funded separately that are now rolled into the general legislative grant.

I am surprised that you have not had an opportunity to consider that. I have a healthy scepticism about that move, both from a labour perspective and for grant purposes. When might we anticipate a response from you on that?

Mrs Lafarga: I believe when we see legislation and the changes in the regulations.

Ms Moss: Could I just add to that? It does not get us closer to the ability to actually cost any programs. There is not currently a way of determining, for example, what is the cost of

French immersion education in kindergarten for even a particular board, let alone on a provincial basis. Even in terms of setting priorities and making choices about programs, the tools are not readily available to include cost-effectiveness in the decision-making.

Mr Jackson: I agree. That is why the government's suggested reforms go in one direction, whereas what I am understanding when I listen to trustees and finance officers of school boards is that we should be going in another direction in terms of being able to track where those dollars are going and how much of those dollars are provincial initiatives that have a full life cycle. The pathological fear of all trustees is, when the government announces a three-year program, that is it; it is over in three years. Then it is all rolled into the GLGs and the pressures continue to mount.

Mrs Lafarga: Certainly the school boards may well have that capacity. We, as a provincial association, do not have that.

Mrs Parker: What we need is a standardized program-cost reporting system.

Mr Jackson: When I looked at the changes that were made—I am probably wrong on this. Around 1979 or 1981 there were some major accounting changes and directives brought out by the ministry which were moving in that direction. It was a prelude to Bill 82 and to OSIS. In my view, it was a positive thing in the sense that it allowed for mutual accountability. I sense that we are moving away from that direction. That is only the point I am trying to get at, and since your general six recommendations deal in that area, I would hope that we might get something solid from your association on that point.

Mrs Parker: Boards are just not able to even compare the costs between themselves because of the difference in reporting.

Mr Jackson: Yes, I am familiar with that.

Mrs Parker: That is difficult for boards as well.

Mr Jackson: On the issue of the lot levies, Bill 20, I did receive your presentation. Subsequent to your presentation, we heard from at least one board that made a joint submission which indicated it was willing to compromise and live with a single fund and trust the government to allocate accordingly. Is that the position your association endorses?

Mrs Lafarga: We were favouring the two accounts.

Mr Jackson: So you still favour the two accounts, and the method by which the accounts

would be paid out would be in accordance with need as determined by the government, or the autonomy for the boards with respect to the amounts they have in their funds?

Mrs Lafarga: I believe that the boards will still have to have government approval for their projects.

Mr Jackson: Okay. I have a quick question about the employer health tax. I understand you were making submissions to the government. Where are you with those submissions? Have you had a hearing? Have you had a response? I know we have heard from the hospital associations and from the post-secondary institutions, but the government has not yet responded as to whether it will grant or forgive portions of the employer health levy.

Mrs Lafarga: We have not had a response on that.

Ms Moss: We will be meeting with the government later today, actually.

Mr Jackson: You are meeting with them later today. Would you make sure that the clerk of the committee gets some sort of feedback on that point? I think it would be a matter of concern to this committee, however we get feedback, whether it is through the ministry or through you, on how those discussions resolve themselves, if at all.

Interjection: Certainly.

Mr Jackson: My final question has to do with your first point, which was the challenge of setting priorities. I guess this is a general question about your association and basically shifting from an educational agenda to a fiscal agenda to a political agenda. I get a sense when I look at some of the polling data that the concern in the community for education is not rising as a provincial concern and that somehow we at Queen's Park react to that trend.

My personal view is that one of the reasons that occurs is that school boards, and perhaps rightly so, always put the most positive face on education at all times. I do not wish to argue whether that is a good or bad strategy, but I happen to believe that when school boards are always enunciating all the good things that are going on in schools, the public somehow gets lulled into a belief that we do not have some serious problems.

I think it is a fair question to ask your organization in terms of whether you have dealt with that issue of becoming advocates in a public way rather than just simply coming to Queen's Park and enunciating your legitimate list of

concerns to politicians but not necessarily taking it to the wider sphere. I realize I am asking you that, Mrs Lafarga, on a day when you spent the morning with Joe Coté and had a tremendous interview, but we need more of that in terms of taking the points you, and virtually every board, have raised and not waiting to hear from you between select committee hearings.

Mrs Lafarga: I believe there is a lot of advocacy work going on. Maybe I can answer Mr Mahoney's question about the cost of our presentation, which was \$2,000. Because we feel this is such a significant presentation, yes, we plan not only to send it out to all our boards, of course, but to the business community too. We feel that what we are saying here is so important that we have to get this on to the public agenda.

The Chairman: We ran out of time about five minutes ago. Mr Daigeler asked for one brief question.

Mr Daigeler: The question is brief; the answer could be long. As a general statement—I am just here for the morning, but nevertheless I used to be quite interested in education—I must say that perhaps it is the nature of provincial committee here, but I am concerned that much of what I am hearing is focused on the question of financing of education. My philosophy and belief—and I may be wrong in my belief—is that the quality of education is not necessarily proportionate to the amount of financing.

I do hope that perhaps we should all of us—and that includes not only the education committee—consider that we have to do more with less. These are just the facts of life. I hope that we all would reorient our thinking away from how can we get more money to how can we provide more quality with the reduced amounts that we are going to get. This is just a general statement. I share it for what it is worth.

Mr Villeneuve: That is not what they said during the election, was it?

Mr Jackson: What committee should you be on, Hans?

Mr Daigeler: I am parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Revenue, so perhaps that is—

Mrs Lafarga: Our whole thrust has been that we should concentrate on the quality of education we want in this province and then from that will flow the funding that will be necessary. Again, if I have to finish on a final note, we believe that the social and economic wellbeing of this province will very much depend on our having that dialogue in the broader community and then transferring that to the successes in the school

system. We are here today because this is the select committee on education holding hearings on finance, so forgive us if we raise the issue of finance.

Mr Daigeler: No, it is on education.

Mr Mahoney: No, it is on finance.

Mrs O'Neill: The financing of education.

Mrs Lafarga: We certainly do appreciate this opportunity and are very prepared to collaborate with you in any way we can. We wish you well in your deliberations and hope you can make some significant impact.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for those best wishes and also for your offer of collaboration. As usual, you have made an excellent contribution to our committee and we thank you.

Our next delegation is the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. We have had a slight change in plans; OECTA has very kindly and graciously indulged the committee. If we could have a 10-minute in camera recess, members will be here at 12 o'clock to hear OECTA's presentation.

The committee continued in camera at 1152.

1206

The Chairman: I would like to reconvene the committee at this stage and again start by expressing my appreciation to the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association for its kind consideration in solving one of the committee's dilemmas this morning and allowing us to go in camera.

Ms Lennon: That is fine. We do not mind at all. We understand what in camera caucuses are like. We have those at our own executive meetings.

The Chairman: You will be glad to note that we have retained almost all the members, even though they are getting coffee right now. Please proceed whenever you are ready. Please start by introducing your panel for our members and for Hansard.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Ms Lennon: I am Eileen Lennon and I am the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association; on my right is Michael Coté, first vice-president; at my extreme left is Michael Haugh, second vice-president; and directly to my left is Dr Robert Dixon, who is our researcher.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association represents 29,000 women and men

teaching in the separate schools in Ontario from kindergarten through to grade 13 and OAC.

We welcome the opportunity to present this brief on financing to you. This is our fourth presentation to you, and we have enjoyed the other presentations; we hope you have and we hope you will enjoy this one as well.

This brief will be general in nature, although if you wish we would be happy to furnish supplementary details; in fact, you will probably find it is fairly thin compared to some of the other volumes we have given you in the past.

The philosophical basis for financing education in Ontario dates to 1846 and Dr Egerton Ryerson. He proposed a system of schools operating with characteristics of equality, universal accessibility, compulsory attendance, compulsory taxation and government grants. By 1871 these features were in place and since that time Ontario has reached the point where it invests in education an amount that exceeds many educational jurisdictions in the world and rivals all others.

It would be difficult to find many parents, trustees, members of the Legislature or other citizens of Ontario who do not wish the best education possible for the children and who are not willing to support financially such an education.

OECTA knows that the select committee is more interested in suggestions for improved methods of financing education in Ontario and thus our brief will concentrate on some of the problems with the general legislative grants.

We would first like to address the issue of adequacy. The concept of a government-defined expenditure ceiling seems to suggest philosophically that the provincial Legislature recognizes an annual amount of money which is believed adequate for a basic program of education; for "basic" I think you could supplement "fundamental" or "essential." However, the fact that most school boards have exceeded these ceilings for a number of years points to the inadequacy of these figures. One might interpret these ceilings differently by speculating that they were designed to shift costs of education from the provincial to the municipal government, contradicting the principles of equality.

In the 1970s the government, under the premiership of William Davis, stated that the provincial share of education costs would be 60 per cent. Two publications of the Ministry of Education in the 1980s, *Issues and Directions* and *Update '84*, repeated this intention.

An examination of appendix A, Education Statistics, Ontario 1987, reveals that while this target was reached in 1973, it has been eroded every year since then, to the point where in 1987 the province's share of funding for education has dropped to 44.9 per cent. This is the lowest figure for all of the provinces of Canada. We understand that the 1988 figure is lower again. We also understand that this is not the first time that you people have heard this, which may say something in itself.

At the same time as the provincial support figure has dropped by almost 16 per cent, the Ministry of Education has mandated new expectations, with attendant additional costs. Among these, for example, are expanded or new programs in French as a second language, physical and health education, co-operative education and special education. More recent provincial thrusts include computer and high-technology education, pay equity, new textbooks free of sexual and racial stereotyping, OSIS, with its new intermediate and senior division curricula, the integration of special-education children into the mainstream, health and safety legislation, drug education, elementary science education, AIDS education, guidance and mentoring, junior kindergartens, and the new grade 9 program. While all of these programs with their cost add-ons seem necessary, nevertheless, no other programs were dropped.

There appears to be an anomaly here: shrinking provincial funding of education versus a rising number of provincial programs that are mandated for schools.

One solution to this problem of inadequacy would be to increase the ceilings and the proportion of provincial funding to a more realistic level. Future new provincial thrusts, like junior kindergarten or the reorganization of secondary education, should be accompanied by increased ceilings, unless another program is dropped, and a provincial share of funding should be maintained to the same degree after the ceiling increase and not just be there for a couple of years.

Therefore, OECTA recommends:

1. That the provincial Legislature increase as expeditiously as possible its share of funding to the 60 per cent level;

2. That any new provincial education programs mandated for the public and separate schools include with their release a suggested establishment and maintenance budget and an appropriate increase in the ceiling with a

continuance of a 60-40 per cent ratio for provincial-municipal funding of education;

3. That there should be cyclical reviews of educational funding, such reviews to examine board budgeting procedures and allocations and the general legislative grants in the light of ministry aims.

On the issue of equity, OECTA's comments on equity will concentrate on two matters: ceilings or approved costs and the corporation tax question.

In the early 1970s Tom Wells, the then Minister of Education, introduced in legislation the concept of ceilings. It was a measure designed to control costs. If the school board exceeded approved per-pupil expenditures, then it had to raise the rest of the money from the local mill rate rather than from provincial grants. However, since 1971 the ceilings have produced a situation that was not intended. For a significant number of school boards there is now both inequality and an inordinately heavy burden on the local taxpayer. Most boards are now spending above ceilings.

The Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario has already commented on this unsatisfactory fact when it pointed out that the concept of equalization fails because the local wealth of school boards, measured by their equalized assessment per pupil, varies widely. The levying of one equalized mill by an assessment-rich board generates a level of tax revenues per pupil several times greater than that generated by an assessment-poor board levying the same equalized mill.

OECTA concurs fully with this statement and urges the select committee to exercise its influence on the provincial Legislature so that this inequity is rectified in order to provide real equity for students in this province, regardless of whether they live in an assessment-rich board or an assessment-poor board.

On the matter of support of separate schools by corporations and partnerships, OECTA expresses with great satisfaction and approval the government's intention to introduce this fall legislation which deals positively with this long-vexatious problem.

We have outlined on the next couple of pages the history of the attempts to deal with providing separate school boards with a fair share of corporation assessment, beginning with Premier Oliver Mowat in 1886. It has been a rocky road and has resulted in very little to this point for separate school boards.

The corporation tax adjustment grant causes three problems: first, grants are not as permanently secure as assessment; second, it is difficult for some members of the public to understand why provincial grants for separate school boards are so much higher than those for public school boards; and third, separate school boards exceeding ceilings impose much heavier burdens upon their ratepayers than those on public school supporters of boards acting in the same way.

Hence, five government commissions since 1967 have pointed out the fundamental inequity involved in corporations and recommended that such taxes be divided in an equitable fashion between the public and the separate school boards. Those commissions are listed there for you. In addition, the governments of Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan have, since Confederation, passed legislation which has given separate or dissentient schools equitable access to corporation assessment.

There are three methods of dividing corporate assessment among public and separate school boards which have been proposed by these various commissions: First, it could be done "in exact proportion to the relative pupil enrolment of the boards"; or second, assessment on commercial and industrial property can be pooled "in the same proportion as the taxable assessment assigned by the owners and occupants of residence," and third, provincial pooling of taxation of industrial and commercial properties.

Any one of these plans would be a vast improvement over the present situation. OECTA is very pleased about the government's announced intention to allow business partners to divide their taxes between separate and public boards, as well as allowing public corporations to do likewise using local residential assessment figures.

As for which of these three methods described above would be the most equitable, perhaps the select committee can conduct a study once the legislation is in place and data are gathered, or a cyclic review could investigate this topic in a few years. It would be our belief, however, that the provincial pooling and a per-pupil distribution would be the fairest.

We would recommend that:

4. Ceilings be raised sufficiently to provide a basic—and you can read "essential" or "fundamental"—program to remove the inequity of most school boards spending above the ceilings;

5. Ceilings should be raised appropriately with a new provincial program with increased costs for schools when this is introduced;

6. Any increase in ceilings should maintain the 60-40 ratio of provincial-municipal funding;

7. Upon the implementation of recommendations 4, 5 and 6, block—and by this we mean program-specific—grants should be discontinued in the interests of equity;

8. The select committee should support and assist the government in amending the Assessment Act and the Education Act so that from 1990 on, partnerships and corporation assessment is divided equitably among public and separate school boards;

9. A study should be instituted to determine which of the three proposed methods of dividing corporate assessment between public and separate boards is the most equitable.

On the issue of accountability, teachers and trustees are currently held accountable in a number of ways by the Education Act and regulations. For example, principals must submit school budgets to their boards; boards must submit spending estimates to the ministry, publish and audit an annual report of receipts and expenditures, provide accommodation, staff and instructional supplies, as well as implement the ministry guidelines; teachers must plan and teach units of study and evaluate pupils.

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The many duties of teachers are monitored by the board's administrative staff and the ministry through co-operative evaluation plans, cyclical reviews and the use of the Ontario assessment instrument pool.

The Ministry of Education, school boards, schools and teachers are all expected to communicate regularly with the parents and the taxpayers.

To assist teaching staffs and school boards it would be greatly helpful if the ministry could (a) describe a basic elementary and secondary education program with suggested costs for various types of schools in different environments; (b) provide the general legislative grant regulations by the end of December to facilitate board planning; (c) include implementation and maintenance costs for new programs; (d) provide workshops for staffs and school boards on communicating effectively with parents through the media, annual reports and other methods; and finally, (e) offer workshops to principals and trustees on priority planning.

It is recommended:

10. That any new ministry programs or amended guidelines include an additional budget.

We have a special note at the end of our presentation. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association takes this opportunity to remind the select committee on education that the implementation of destreaming in Ontario's high schools will have to include a funding plan. In our September 1989 brief, we pointed out that it would be most unfortunate to attempt to make such a far-reaching change without ensuring that there be special funds for a suitable student-teacher ratio, in-service and resource materials.

We therefore recommend:

11. That the release of the new secondary school plan be accompanied by additional funding for suitable student-teacher ratios, in-service and resource materials.

We would like to thank the members of the select committee on education once again for this opportunity to dialogue and for your continued interest in the education of the children of this province. We would be most pleased to present, at some time in the future, on another topic and to answer any questions you might have on today's presentation.

The Chairman: Thank you, Eileen, for a very well done brief. Over the past year and a half that this select committee has been meeting, we have come to expect very well documented, well-researched briefs from OECTA and once again you have not failed us. We have three members who have indicated they would like to ask questions: Mr Jackson, followed by Mr Johnston and Mrs O'Neill.

Mr Jackson: I am very pleased with your final point on the destreaming. We have had a lot of groups present the notion of add-on programs or ministry initiatives without subsequent funding, and it strikes me that the destreaming initiatives, whether they came from this committee or not, do require considerable dollars. Also, they should involve public participation. I am finding that some boards are not involving the public. They are just simply in-house projects with a few teachers and a lot of staff and trustees, so I would like to see a little more equity on that, as well as the funding. Thank you for putting that on the record. It may specifically find its way into our recommendations.

I want to address your first point, which has to do with the 60 per cent level. I wonder if having heard that figure now for the last 15 years of my educational experience—I must admit for the record that Dr Bob Dixon was a fine and former

employee of the Halton Board of Education. I enjoyed working with him in that capacity for several years.

Mr Reycraft: I never knew you were in education 15 years ago.

Mr Jackson: I was a trustee at the time and he was a director of certain programs in our system and we were very delighted to have him there.

I wonder how relevant the notion of 60 per cent really is and whether the shareholders in education are not doing a disservice by just simply urging a return to the 60 per cent level? The reason I ask that is because we know that in political terms that definition has been reinterpreted. We also know we are probably moving in a direction where the government might even be in a position to say, "We are at the 60 per cent level when you blend in superannuated payments and capital."

I wonder to what extent all of us are not helping the situation by using that. That is not meant as a criticism. Basically, I would ask you, for the record, to be more specifically clear on that, because I think we should all be a little more careful about using that 60 per cent figure. I do not even know if 60 per cent is a relevant figure any more, but I know there is much debate in the province over the way we arrive at it.

Ms Lennon: I think that is a question that is always asked, "Sixty per cent of what?" "Sixty per cent of the world." I think our position would be that it is 60 per cent of the ordinary and extraordinary expenditures of education and would specifically state that it does not include superannuation payments, does not include transportation and does not include capital building costs.

If you go back to when we all think that magic year was, 1971 or 1975 when it was at 60 per cent, that could be the basis, looking at what it was 60 per cent of then. That will probably give us a good starting-off point to decide what we mean by 60 per cent. But we would be most upset if the government said, "Oh yes, we're at the 60 per cent level," and threw in the superannuation payments and the capital building costs and all of those other things. It is the ordinary and extraordinary pupil expenditures that go on in the school board.

Mr Jackson: I am wondering, though, if it might not be more relevant to today's political challenges in education that we look at the percentage of the total budget dedicated to elementary and secondary education in this province. One statistic we heard was that in 1975 it represented about 16 per cent of the total

provincial budget and that now today it has slipped to or under 10 per cent. I wonder if that might be a more relevant global approach to education, for the community to understand that any government—the previous government or this government—is allowing that to slip as a provincial priority, because I am deeply troubled at how difficult it is to get these agenda items forward in the public.

Ms Lennon: I think I will let Dr Dixon take a shot at that because I find it difficult to know what else would get thrown into that mix. He is indicating he would like a shot at it himself.

Mr Jackson: He would like to try it.

Dr Dixon: Trustee Jackson and I have discussed education matters before so I take this shot at it with some temerity. Coming from the provincial teachers' association point of view, the 60 per cent figure is probably one the government should be interested in restoring simply to say that it not only has a half-interest in the way education is going in this province but that it historically has always had a majority interest.

If you throw into the hopper the concept of equality across the province, it seems to us, at least philosophically speaking, that if the government is going to keep a handle on delivering equality, it should have a majority interest. That is kind of the philosophical stance from which we are coming. I get the feeling you are talking about the mechanics of the thing and I do not know whether we can comment any further on that.

Ms Lennon: I do not know what 16 per cent of the total government budget is. It seems to me that government educational finance is complicated enough right now without deciding we are going to decide on the magic figure, based on what is going on in health, transportation, debt charges and all of the rest of it. It seems to me that might make it more complicated.

Mr Jackson: What triggered it was that that was the significant point the Ontario Public School Boards' Association wanted to advance. When you look at the whole maze of recommendations, the whole series of complaints—we are getting a lot of those—the bottom line tends to be that we are seeing a reduction in priority for our total, that somehow we have to set the priority. We cannot expect school boards to do it. Most of the programs are mandated provincially down to the boards. Really, it comes down to where this province places the importance of education and its value and its social objectives, as Mr Johnston

has developed and worked on very hard on the destreaming concept, and so on.

It just strikes me that we are dealing with a 15-year-old figure and concepts. Quite frankly, we can reduce the expenditure, the percentage of general legislative grants and still come out a door where we can argue in the next provincial election that we have raised the funding to 60 per cent because we have added the superannuated payments and the capital and everything else—this is not news to you—so it is almost self-defeating.

I think the trustees' organizations have realized that. I am just anxious to see if the teachers' federation might share that view, because obviously the agenda still keeps slipping. You can keep coming before this committee with the same items, but when the ground keeps continually eroding away, it really means that something is not getting through to provincial politicians. I will leave it at that because I know there are other questions.

1230

The Chairman: You are quite right; there are other questions. Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have noticed over the years that many things do not get through to provincial politicians, including myself. I think it would be fascinating to get from the ministry what the approved ceilings of 1975 actually covered and what the rationale was for the 60 per cent of real approved costs in those days. Why do we not see if we can get hold of that?

Mrs O'Neill: Do you want the approved costs? We have been told it was costs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have these tables at the moment that still use that figure and take us down to today's 42 per cent. Presumably, the bases have been similar, but there have been programmatic changes. It would be very interesting to see what it was actually based on, just from a historical perspective. I have no idea what we will find.

Mr Jackson: It was pre-Bill 82; that is one thing we know. Special education has now been rolled into the GLGs. That just gives you one classic example.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would be really interesting to see just what the limitations were on that point, though, for our perspective.

The Chairman: Mr Brumer, perhaps you could provide that for the committee. I understand that the clerk is going to be inviting Mr Trbovich and yourself and anybody else from the finance branch who is deemed appropriate to

come on Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock. Perhaps you could give us an analysis, and maybe a fairly comprehensive one, of the various phases of funding since 1970 on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Let's just take the year that it was 60 per cent.

The Chairman: I think it was 1973.

Mr Jackson: The watershed year was 1975.

Mrs O'Neill: Do not forget, folks, that there were ceilings on spending in those days. They were just coming off, so it is a whole mix here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not think we are going to end up with apples and apples to compare. I just think it would be very interesting to see. There is a philosophical premise, which I think Dr Bob has talked about here, about a majority of costs being assumed. There was a lot of political language in those days about what 60 per cent was. I just think it would be really neat to see, 60 per cent of what in those days, and to look at what we are talking about 60 per cent of now. I think that will indicate some major change, but not much more than that.

I have some problems with the 60-40 split presumption that is out there. I think it has been put in all our minds for years back. Commission after commission has talked about that, and then of course the politics of the 1960s established it very firmly in people's minds. But when we look at other models in British Columbia, Quebec and other provinces where 100 per cent of the cost can be picked up, or 80 per cent, or 90 per cent in Quebec, obviously there are other models out there, especially when you are looking for accountability, which is one of the major problems I have.

I agree with you that there is a kind of accountability out there, but it is very hard for the average elector to be able to go to a trustee and know what that trustee was actually responsible for and what the provincial government was indirectly responsible for, either because of funding something or not funding something. I think that in many ways we maybe need to think again about this property tax base that the 40 per cent figure will still inflict upon a lot of people in the province.

I throw that out as a commentary for all of us to think about. I can certainly understand why players in the system would just love to get back to 60 per cent and not have to try to deal with other larger conceptual problems.

Ms Lennon: It is better than the direction we have been going—

Mr R. F. Johnston: It certainly seems to be.

Ms Lennon: —which is closer to 40 per cent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. Tell me a little more about the streaming issue. There are some people who are opting into this voluntarily at the moment, the destreaming of grade 9.

Ms Lennon: As you know, we made a presentation last year and certainly went out on a limb, as some of you probably realize, when we recommended that all of the research indicated that we should have destreaming in our secondary schools. That seems like it is going to happen in grade 9, but we were very clear at the time of saying that that there has to be a lot of things that go along with that. We cannot just say we are going to destream and leave everything else the same. That is no improvement at all. We are very concerned that the government has announced that grade 9 will be destreamed, but we are still awaiting the funding that is going to go along with that.

I am not quite sure who is doing it voluntarily and who is not doing it voluntarily. Mike Haugh is a secondary school vice-principal and might be able to comment on what he knows is going on in terms of who is doing it, but we are very concerned that that message go back that there needs to be planning, and planning soon because it is going to happen soon. There need to be some support materials, curriculum materials, teacher in-service and something done about student-teacher ratios if it is going to work. I think we agree that it would be the best thing, but it has to be done right.

Mr Haugh: I think the only comment I would like to make with respect to that is, first, to confess that I am not apprised of any particular group that is doing it voluntarily. I am rather surprised to hear that, as a matter of fact. My experience has been just the opposite, that they are going to be dragged, kicking and screaming. With respect to some of the things Ms Lennon has pointed out, I would like you to contemplate that particular movement initiative from the perspective—you have heard quite a bit, I am sure, about particular programs being initiated without appropriate funding or support, in the minds of many people, while what you are doing here is looking at all the programs at a particular level in the education system.

Again, I would like you particularly to give some thought towards the necessity for in-service of teachers, to be able to cope successfully with this. If you are talking about accountability, not just in the fiscal sense but in terms of quality of education, then I think it is incumbent on you to

give that some very serious reflection. Obviously, in-service speaks as well to the necessity for the provision of, let's say, adequate resources in terms of texts, teaching materials and that type of thing.

I think it is fine to say on a philosophical basis, and we have said it that it is a very sound step, a very sound initiative and provides for equity for pupils. But when you consider the amount of outlay at this point in time, getting back to fiscal terms, with respect to the different levels of education within the secondary program and at the same time consider that you are going to meld all those together, then I think it becomes self-evident that there are some very serious concerns about adequately providing for funding that initiative to make sure it is successful. If that is not the step taken, then I will categorically guarantee it will be horrendous.

Dr Dixon: I have just a couple of supplementary remarks. It is our understanding that the Ministry of Education has made the school boards aware that there is some money available for any experiments boards wish to conduct this coming fall. To my knowledge, there is one secondary school under the Hamilton Board of Education that is going to be operating under that. In addition, there is a secondary school with the Toronto Board of Education that is more or less going on its own with its own funding.

However, there are a number of schools, the one which I am presently associated with among them, that are experimenting right now. We have taken a number of programs in grade 9 and gone nonstreamed by taking our pupil-teacher ratios in the upper grades and raising them somewhat and lowering them in grade 9.

I think the committee should be aware that the consciousness level of the secondary school teachers in the province has been raised considerably by your recommendations to the government and the government's announcement. These, of course, are professional people who have been doing something one way for their entire career and who were trained to do something one way. I would say most of them agree that there is a necessity now to get off this system, but understandably there is a certain professional fear—fear is too strong a word but they know that they need in-service, not one of these one-shot, one-day Bible revivalist talks, but serious in-service.

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The mechanism is there through the department heads. Your average department head has anywhere from 25 to 50 per cent release from

classroom time in order to provide leadership and in-service for his or her staff. It is not a huge, big-ticket item as it would be in the elementary schools where you just have the principal. You do have the platoon of department heads, but we are talking money here and I think it is time now for the government to move to the second phase. Now that they have raised the consciousness level, let's start providing the teachers with what they need and want in professional development.

Ms Lennon: And soothe the anxiety level a little bit.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Anxiety would have been a good term, and scepticism another. I had other questions, but I will let them go because that was rather a full answer.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Johnston. I appreciate that. We are already around six minutes over time for the presentation. I think in view of your co-operation the least we can do is have Mrs O'Neill's and Mr Villeneuve's questions.

Mrs O'Neill: I would like to compliment you again on the brief. I liked the historical perspective you have given. I think it is good for us. I think you are the first one who has gone back to Smith and Blair, and it is nice to have our memories jogged that that has been going on that long. I also found page 14 rather interesting because it seems to me that it is almost identical to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's recommendations to us this morning. The similarity is absolutely awesome to me.

Ms Lennon: There was no collaborative effort.

Mrs O'Neill: No, I do not think there was. I think it likely is quite healthy in a time when we are being asked to do so much more in the way of co-operation and liaison.

I am wondering if you can answer very briefly if you think it is possible to describe a basic elementary and secondary education program. The reason I ask that is because there is always this dichotomy of central versus local. I am not sure that a definition is possible even though two austere bodies have brought it to us this morning as a possibility.

Ms Lennon: I think it is really difficult to answer that in a very brief way, to capsule what that is. I think, however, that teachers, as a professional group, would be very willing to sit down and look at the curriculum guidelines that are there and work with other interested parties in education in deciding what those fundamentals are.

I think in a broad sense it is literacy, it is the ability to communicate, it is some sort of a basic level of numeracy. I think you would have to sit down and work at it in terms of the guidelines. People in our profession would be very willing to sit down and do that.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you think benchmarks will be part of the way to what you are describing there?

Ms Lennon: I think they are one instrument that is helpful, as long as various kinds of testing do not get latched on to, and that becomes the only thing we focus on and the only thing we consider. There has been a lot in the press about where we stood in terms of some of the international tests, but I think you have to put them in the broad perspective of what is going on in our schools.

In some of the school systems elsewhere that people say are so wonderful, we know they are having a lot of problems. Students in Japan are having nervous breakdowns and Japanese educators are coming here and looking at our system, and trying to see how they can make theirs a bit more flexible and open. People really like to hark back to, "If we just tested everybody that would be fine," the idea of cyclical reviews.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I slipped through.

Mr Jackson: Because of a little bit of numeracy. New math.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much. It looks like, from what you have said, you will be back to see us many times. We are really happy for the consultation and the co-operation we find.

Ms Lennon: We are happy to consult with you. Thank you.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you for your presentation. It was a most interesting one. We will not get into ceilings, because I think this is a dilemma that this committee will face over a number of weeks—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Years.

Mr Villeneuve: Yes, years probably.

Recommendation 8, page 12: "The select committee support and assist government in amending the Assessment Act and Education Act." We know pooling has been announced and it will be a fact of life. Could you give us your impressions on how you would like to see the divvying up of the commercial and industrial assessment and also your opinion on lot levies and how you divvy up those dollars?

Ms Lennon: On the first one, I think that we have outlined to you that there are three

possibilities. We have a basic belief that the fairest way of doing it, from our point of view, would be that there would be provincial pooling and that it would then be distributed on a per-pupil basis. However, we certainly feel that the proposed legislation, as it was outlined in May or June or whenever the announcement was, is certainly a big step in that direction.

I think one of the other things that I would like to note in our brief is that we are saying that this should be examined in two or three years after we have been living with this new form of local taxation and it should be examined in terms of the other pooling models that have been suggested. It should not just be considered that this is settled once and for all, and we never have to look at this question again. The government should decide that it will have a cyclical review of that, just as it has cyclical reviews of all kinds of other things.

It is our belief that provincial pooling and a per-pupil basis of distributing it would be the most fair, but we are certainly happy with—

Mr Jackson: You understand the politics of it.

Ms Lennon: We understand the politics very well.

Mr Villeneuve: I appreciate that, and there will be some politics there. The fact that capital funding is being reduced from 75 per cent to 60 per cent will certainly have some bearing on that as well.

Another area, and this will be my last question, is your reaction to the sharing of facilities: school and classroom facilities, transportation facilities. Could we have you on the record as to where you stand on that? How far should we go? Are you ready to go and how far?

Ms Lennon: If we can have our own schools and there is not a necessity for sharing, that is certainly the most desirable position. However, I think there have been several examples around the province where sharing has worked and in some situations it probably is the only kind of pragmatic and realistic way to deal with it.

I think it has to be worked out at the local level, and it takes a lot of co-operation and consultation by all of the local parties. As a provincial association, we have tended not to get involved in any of those situations. We have very much left it up to the local people and have encouraged them to co-operate and do the best that they can. It is always difficult.

Mr Villeneuve: Because lot levies, pooling, etc, will not help assessment-poor boards that are poor now—they will remain that way and the rich will divvy up things in a slightly different way,

but they will remain with a lot more funds—that remains a major problem that this committee must address.

Ms Lennon: The provincial pooling would help the assessment-poor boards the best. I mean, you are not just sharing poverty then. The rich really can share with the poor. When it is just local pooling, in many instances it is the poor sharing with the poor, which is preferable to not sharing at all.

Mr Villeneuve: The worst of how many evils. Thank you.

The Chairman: Just when you thought you were about to escape, Mr Reycraft has asked for a very small question. It might be a bigger answer.

Mr Reycraft: Well, a couple of brief questions about an issue that I used to know more about, for obvious reasons, than I do now, and it is teacher's salaries. We heard in Windsor on Monday afternoon from the director of the London and Middlesex board that it has signed a new agreement with its teachers that provides for no increase in salary and, I think, no increase in benefits either. I was not aware of that even though I represent the area. I am interested in knowing how common that has been across the province.

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Ms Lennon: Thankfully, it has not been common at all. As you can well imagine, it would not be a position that we would support.

Mr Reycraft: No, I understand that fully.

Ms Lennon: In fact, it is the first I have heard of it as well. This is news to me this morning, that anyone had agreed to no salary increases.

Mr Reycraft: My other question is, can you tell me how great the gap is between public school teachers and teachers in Catholic schools on a province-wide basis?

Ms Lennon: Generally, I think they compare quite well. I think where you would find the biggest differences still, although we consider that we are making gains, is in secondary school principals and vice-principals. Otherwise, I think that in most instances—sometimes in an area we are ahead or the public school board is ahead—they are very comparable.

Mr Reycraft: When I asked the Toronto Board of Education this morning about the difference in cost of education in the city of Toronto vis-à-vis the rest of the province, it indicated that higher salaries were one of the reasons why it cost almost \$2,000 more per student to educate kids here in Toronto than it

does in Middlesex. Do you know how much salaries vary across the province? The Ottawa-Carleton area, I know, has always been the highest.

Ms Lennon: I still think that generally the highest-paid teachers are in the far north. I could easily find that sort of information in terms of our own boards, or the Education Relations Commission could find it. There are not really huge variances, and, say, we are an A4 maximum across the province.

Certainly the cost of living in Metro Toronto has become so much greater than in the rest of the province. As the school boards in this area are coming to a crunch in terms of teacher shortage, I think they are beginning to recognize that people are leaving because they can go somewhere and live cheaper and make the same salary. They are certainly anticipating that they are going to have to sweeten the pie to keep people living here.

Mr Reycraft: I think that is generally true of all employers in the Metro area, not just school boards.

Ms Lennon: Yes. But currently, on current statistics, probably you could still make more money if you taught in Moosonee in terms of pure salary.

Mr Reycraft: Generally then, is it fair to say that the lack of commercial-industrial assessment has not had a major effect on teachers' salaries, either between public boards and Catholic boards or between assessment-poor boards and—

Ms Lennon: We think we have done such a good job, even though the boards have less money, that if they had more money perhaps we would do even better.

Mr Jackson: You might even indicate that in York region Catholic ratepayers are paying an extraordinarily larger tax bill than public school ratepayers. It would be the exact same house next door to each other. I think the corollary to that is that there has been some—when you squeeze a balloon, it is bulging somewhere else. In fact, it has been picked up by ratepayers. There are also the debts which the ministry has indicated are rather illegal, but separate boards have had to deal with the realities of certain collective agreements. In one board it is \$3 million. I think the York board is over—

Ms Lennon: My answer to Mr Reycraft was slightly flip, and I probably should not have done that.

Mr Jackson: To a fellow confederate?

Mr Reycraft: I have never belonged to OECTA.

Ms Lennon: The other thing that I think you would notice, and it certainly affects our teachers, is that the separate school boards do not have nearly the number of specialist teachers. I know that we would have loved to have a music teacher, a phys-ed teacher and an art teacher in my own elementary school, which I think almost all of the public schools in my city probably had.

I think you will find that those sorts of things reflect the difference in the amounts of money, certainly in terms of the amount of audio-visual equipment and those sorts of resources that are available. High schools with 50 or 75 staff have two overhead projectors. That is really very stressful to the teacher's life. Those are the kinds of ways that, I think, we have tended to cut over the years, and the lack of specialists.

The Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank OECTA for your presentation, as well as again expressing our appreciation of your indulgence in allowing us our 10-minute in camera recess, and also the indulgence of committee members in staying so late.

I appreciate that one hour is not long to return phone calls, sign correspondence and grab a bite to eat, but if we could get back here for our in camera session sharp at two, I think we will begin right at two. The select committee on education stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon in camera.

The committee adjourned at 1256.

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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Financement du système scolaire



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 28 September 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 28 September 1989

The committee met at 1006 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING

(continued)

FINANCEMENT DU SYSTÈME SCOLAIRE (suite)

The Chairman: I would like to open up this session of the select committee on education as we continue to look at elementary and secondary financing in Ontario, particularly related to the equity, adequacy and accountability of both capital and operating finances.

Before we start with our first presentation, Mr Reyecraft has some information for the record.

Mr Reyecraft: On a point of privilege: Yesterday afternoon, when asking a question of Eileen Lennon of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, I referred to a comment that had been made in Windsor by Ken Regan, the director of education for the London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I unintentionally misstated the submission Mr Regan had made. I indicated that the collective agreement the board had signed with its elected group was an extension of the 1988-89 agreement. That is not the case. What Mr Regan stated in the brief on Monday afternoon was that the collective agreement that was negotiated between the board and the teachers had no improvements in working conditions, benefits or special allowances. Indeed, there had been an economic adjustment to the grid. So it is not the same agreement they had in 1988-89. That caused some confusion yesterday and I wanted to set the record straight.

The Chairman: Thank you for that clarification.

Our first presentation this morning is from the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. If you could come forward, please. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we hope at least part of that can be reserved for questions at the end. If you would begin by introducing yourselves for the purpose of Hansard and then commence your presentation whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr Martin: I am Bill Martin, president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. With me today is Gene Lewis to my right, the first vice-president of OPSTF, and our general secretary, Dave Lennox. Our cameraman today is Harold Vigoda, who is the legislative observer for OPSTF.

The Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation represents 14,200 statutory members, 6,300 occasional teacher members and 2,000 voluntary members who teach in the province's public education system. The federation is pleased to make this submission to the Legislature's select committee on education.

OPSTF believes that the funding of education in this province is simply inadequate. It is paradoxical for the provincial government to reduce its share of educational expenditure from 23 to 18 per cent in a 10-year period while it espouses the virtues of education and places unrealistic demands on school boards and staff.

The present funding formula does not work. Tinkering with the current formula will not fix it. A large influx of money into the current model or into a new model is the only solution.

As we state on page 4 of our brief, OPSTF firmly believes that the financing of education must be a shared responsibility among federal, provincial and local governments. Further, it stands to reason that since it is the province that sets the educational agenda, it must be the province that is the single largest contributor to the funding of education.

This philosophy does not abrogate the responsibility of the local taxpayer to pay a share of the cost. Local revenues should be directed towards the function of additional programs that are requested and required by the community which the school serves.

The needs of our public schools are constantly changing. A recent example would be the challenges of the growing immigration population of Metro. This demand alone requires an immediate recalculation by the federal government of its transfer payments to this province for the value of education of these students.

I would ask you to go to page 5. How the three levels of government will appropriately and

realistically fund education should not remain a political football any longer. Ontario must develop a new educational formula immediately. OPSTF believes that resource-cost models need to be examined. It may provide a viable alternative which would rectify the present underfunding of education. Secretary Dave Lennox will speak on this topic in a few minutes.

In any model that is to be chosen, however, there must be equality between the two educational divisions. OPSTF continually poses the questions that you see before you on page 5: Why is a 16-year-old worth more than a six-year-old? Why do elementary students have to use inappropriate equipment handed down by their secondary colleagues? We have never received a straightforward answer to our questions. For the record, we ask this committee to consider the recognition of the elementary student by recommending in its final report that the formula must reflect that equal dollars are made available to each age group and each division of elementary and secondary schools.

On page 6 we look at the funding formula. The current funding formula in Ontario, to be kind, is incomprehensible. There is something wrong with a system that is so complex that few in Ontario are able to comprehend how the educational dollar is procured and apportioned to school boards. Its ceilings, which you have been told by delegation after delegation for the past three weeks, are unrealistic. There can be little doubt that variations in the equalized assessed value among school boards are a primary factor in the variation of expenditures per pupil.

The 1985 report of the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario, which brought forth so many positive recommendations for financing public education, has now ironically become a thorn to public education in this province. Only recommendations 19 and 20, dealing with commercial and industrial assessment and support for separate schools, have been recommended from this report.

If you look at the middle of page 7, you will see three goals of the commission which it was working from when it began its study. I pose the following questions when you look at those goals: What happened to the assumption that education is the primary responsibility of the government of Ontario? Does anyone remember that the quality of education in our province was to be maintained and wherever possible improved, and that the equality of educational

opportunity is a goal towards which Ontarians must strive?

As we state on page 8, provincial government funding is deteriorating. This is a further irony of a government that has stated to the citizens of Ontario that education is its number one priority. Education is the focal point of this policy year for this government, yet the real 1989 grants came in below inflation.

I would ask you to turn to pages 9 through 12, which deal with figures 1, 2 and 3.

When you look at page 9, in our brief we have talked about the machination of statistics and here we have clear examples of what we have referred to. When you look at 1989, government support is suggested as being 57.24 per cent. We have studied those statistics, and we know it is only 57.24 per cent because you have included capital expenditures and the teachers' superannuation fund. That might look good in the newspapers, but when we deal with facts it is certainly not much of a change. In fact, if you look at 1988 and 1989, we are still in a decreasing role as far as the financial support of the provincial government is concerned.

When you look at the graphs in figure 2 on page 10, and we compare ourselves to the other provinces across Canada, it is pretty discouraging to see that a province with the wealth of Ontario is last with respect to the contributions to the sharing of funding of education.

If you take it one step further and go to figure 3, which is found on page 12, what we talked about at the beginning is that we have a government that talks about how important education is. When we compare those statistics from 1976 and 1977 to 1986 and 1987, we are looking at a five per cent reduction over that period of time, from 23 to 18 per cent. Hopefully in 1990, this year of our educational focus, Ontario will move out of last place in the provincial share of educational funding. In 1990, may we at least return to the rank we held in the distribution of Ontario's expenditures over a decade ago, which would be 23 per cent of the contribution rate.

Mandated special education, secondary school reform, heritage language and other programs outlined on page 11 have overloaded the local school board's ability to fund the massive number of centralized initiatives. In spite of numerous pleas from school boards and associations for provincial funding to be attached to educational changes, each ensuing government has made the assumption that its general legislative grants were adequate and ignored the

ever-expanding expenditures above ceilings incurred by school boards, which have grown dangerously to 20 per cent of the total cost of education.

When school boards must raise 100 per cent of the \$1.9 billion of overexpenditures, it is most evident that educational finance in Ontario is urgently in need of repair. The formula must be recalculated to address the needs of the forthcoming baby boom echo. Well-trained teachers, sophisticated equipment, state-of-the-art resources and better than adequate facilities should be in place. We know they are not in place.

Virtually all studies agree with our statement on page 14 that investment in elementary education pays a higher rate of return than does investment in either secondary or post-secondary education. The earlier you get to a problem, the easier the solution. OPSTF desires a formula that recognizes these studies.

On page 15 we address alternate funding models. I will now ask Dave Lennox to lead you through this section of the submission.

1020

Mr Lennox: The history of educational funding in Ontario has been rather interesting if you track it all the way back to Egerton Ryerson's days, but I will not go back that far with you, even though my major is in history. I want to take you up to recent times and explain to you why educational financing in Ontario is incorrect.

It is incorrect for two reasons. The first one is the fact that we have never, in Ontario, costed education. We have never figured out what it costs to educate somebody. The second reason is that we work at financing education in a reverse format; individuals on the select committee on education like Ken Keyes remember what reciprocal fractions are. What occurs is that we start financing education in Ontario with the Treasurer (Mr R. F. Nixon), instead of costing education. What occurs is that the Treasurer sets the amount of money that can go to education. Then what the Ministry of Education does is work backward. It does not sound like a very sound system to me, to work backward to finance education, recognizing the fact that there are limited dollars in this very wealthy province.

The interesting aspect is that the formula takes a reciprocal fraction. If the Treasurer says you have \$500 million or \$1 billion to finance education, the Ministry of Education has to set its formula on the other side, with the provincial equalization mill rate being the bottom half of the reciprocal fraction and the grants being the other half. That is what occurs.

What we would like you to consider, on page 16, is not a perfect solution. There is no perfect solution to financing education. As the deputy minister commented, if you kept throwing money at education, you would never throw enough at it. But the resource model that has been developed for British Columbia is one that we suggest you study very carefully, because this starts at the correct side of the equation: What are the costs of education? What are the programs we want to provide? How many units are out there? What is the province going to contribute? What is the shared responsibility of the local level?

In the middle of page 16, you will see the three components. One is the program and service specifications established from the provincial level. What are the programs the province wants to provide and how are we going to fund those programs? What are the service specifications we are going to provide? What are the student enrolment patterns we have and how are we going to provide for those? How are we going to provide for class size? What are we going to provide for the ancillary human resources we are going to need? What are the resource price and costing data? What are these services going to cost us to get the resources? I would recommend that you study that very carefully.

At this time, even though we talk about it later, I want you to flip to—I will do it all at once; if you turn to page 26, one of the aspects we have to deal with—it is one thing to talk about continued underfunding of education and especially underfunding of elementary education, but I think we have to take a look also at the results of the British Columbia study on accountability, the Report of the Royal Commission on Education. I do not think you can have one without the other.

Therefore, on page 26, we take a look at two forms of accountability that need to be in place in Ontario, procedural and consequential. The procedural one is fairly easy; that is, we do an audit. The boards submit it to the government. We audit. We do random audits across the province. I wish we would do a few more of them, to be quite honest with you, but we account for the funds.

The second one is the interesting aspect of accountability, the consequential accountability. When you come to consequential accountability, you are talking about three aspects: efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. We have to start addressing those aspects to find out whether the money that is being spent on education is being very well spent and whether we are getting

the bang for the buck, I guess is the term I would like to use.

So I think when you are looking at an alternative funding model for Ontario, which I really hope you do, you need to keep those two very close to each other so that they will be of assistance to you.

Mr Martin: As we state on page 17, elementary education has been underfunded in this province since 1816, a preposterous but, sadly, true fact. For almost 200 years, we have been trying to catch up.

Figure 4 on page 18 reveals what has taken place since 1970, if I could direct you to page 18 at this time. When you look at 1989, the gap is recommended as being \$887. I must admit that last year when I was in my office and people gave me this information, I got very excited, until we started to analyse what the \$887 meant. Again, it was playing with figures. The only reason it was \$887 was by the blending of specific grant money into the funding model. Our calculations estimate that if you had not blended those moneys into the formula, in fact the gap would have risen to \$951 last year.

Does anyone in this room still believe that elementary teachers are not every bit as qualified as other teaching professionals? If you look at figure 5 on page 20, it indicates that there has been a dramatic increase in the qualifications of elementary teachers over the past 10 years. Our qualifications have in fact increased six times as fast as those of secondary teachers, yet the increase given to elementary grant ceilings ignores this fact.

The nature and size of elementary schools have also dramatically changed over the last 10 to 15 years. These larger school units require increased services such as secretarial assistance, guidance and other support systems and resources to meet the needs of children.

The average pupil-teacher ratio for elementary and secondary panels, figure 7 on page 24, from 1979 to 1988, supports the thesis that continued underfunding exists. There is 12 per cent more human resources at the secondary level than at the elementary level when you figure out all the calculations. Additional funding is required at the elementary level in order to improve pupil-teacher ratios and class size to create better learning conditions for each pupil. Any new formula that is created must recognize this fact.

Elementary schools raised \$5.9 million in 1986 for essentials by fund-raising activities. That is an awful lot of hot dog sales. These were conducted by pupils, teachers and parents.

Fund-raising for essentials indicates that the formula for elementary education needs recalculation. I would not want to tell you how much money comes out of the elementary teachers' pockets in order to be able to make their classrooms the enjoyable learning environment they are in some of the systems across this province.

OPSTF believes that the provincial government to this date has not been prepared to address the continued underfunding of elementary education and continues to place the future of today's pupils in jeopardy. It is my hope, and I have stated this before, that the select committee will lead the way to rectify this situation.

While our submission focuses on the underfunding of education, our federation has, on pages 27 through 29, delineated its position on several other important financial topics.

The Chairman: Mr Martin, excuse me for interrupting. I just wanted to let you know that there are less than 10 minutes left.

Mr Martin: I have about two minutes.

The Chairman: That is perfect.

Mr Martin: A few weeks ago, OPSTF in a submission to the select committee on finance and economic affairs expressed its opposition to the concept of lot levies to pay for new school construction. Beginning on page 27, we still urge that it is a regressive tax and affects the concept of affordable housing negatively.

OPSTF does not support the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment for separate school boards. We strongly encourage this committee to study the implications of funding before it is implemented. Single-panel funding should be placed on the back burner until the underfunding of elementary education is resolved.

1030

We applaud the present government's attempt to address the problems related to the underfunding of capital projects, but the problem is far from resolved. OPSTF urges the provincial government to continue its initiatives in funding capital projects in a similar manner as in the last three years until the problem is resolved.

The major contention of the OPSTF submission is that the funding of education, particularly elementary education, is inadequate. Continuing the present funding formula will only exacerbate the problem. If the government truly believes that education is a priority, it must address this issue through an increased financial commitment.

OPSTF leaves you with six recommendations and I will ask that Gene Lewis read them into the record.

Mr Lewis: The Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation recommends:

1. That the government of Ontario request federal funding for English-as-a-second-language/dialect programs for immigrant children;

2. That the government of Ontario fund elementary and secondary education on an average of 60 per cent excluding capital funding and superannuation;

3. That the government of Ontario funding formula recognize that costs related to educating elementary children are comparable to costs related to educating secondary pupils;

4. That the government of Ontario commission a study to investigate the real costs of elementary education;

5. That the government of Ontario consider replacing its present educational funding program with some form of resource cost model;

6. That the Legislature's select committee on education become a permanent, all-party body to monitor program priorities of the Ministry of Education.

That concludes our presentation.

The Chairman: Just before we go to Mr Johnston, Mr Keyes, Mrs O'Neill and Mr Jackson, I would like to mention for the benefit of the committee that our researcher, David Pond, has asked for British Columbia's Report of the Royal Commission on Education. He is attempting to locate that through our Legislative Library, so I hope we will have that for committee members.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If he cannot find it, if necessary we would travel there to have a look at it ourselves.

The Chairman: Actually, I am going there this weekend, so I can pick it up.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thanks a lot.

I appreciate the presentation very much, both in terms of some of the short-term objectives, like getting back to the original percentage of the province-wide budget that is spent on education, and your usual plea in terms of the elementary panel funding which we will have to address in our report, and also for looking past the present system to the future. I appreciate that because I think a lot of people who are trapped in the system at the moment have come before us with suggestions for minor amelioration rather than

looking at a fundamental redrawing of how we are funding education. That is very useful.

I have two matters. One was that you did not list the downsides of the resource cost model. You say it is not a panacea. I wonder if you could help us a little bit with some of that because most of us are totally unaware of the basis for it.

Mr Martin: I will refer that to David.

Mr Lennox: There are some downsides on the bottom of page 16. We figured you cannot put that in without giving the downsides. There are tradeoffs in resource cost models that get into some more centralization. Also, a fairly sophisticated coding needs to be done to make sure that we are talking the same language all the time; it does need quite a system of it.

Second, British Columbia took a long time to divide its system into understandable components and each board has to work off the same components. It does not mean that the local board cannot raise more tax dollars out there, but it is a more centralized system. We also have to recognize that when they did this, the provincial commercial and industrial assessment in BC is held with the resource cost model, whereas the residential property tax is left at the local level. There are those factors that need to be very seriously considered.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It strikes me that those are not necessarily all downsides. I think your comment on page 6 is one of the ultimately true ones. Our system is now so complex that people in the system do not understand it that well, let alone the average elector.

My difficulty with just tinkering with our present system of the province and board sharing—the 60-40 split that is always thrown out—is that I do not think it answers the question of how the local elector knows when he should be going after the board for its responsibility and when he should be going after the province.

It strikes me that province-wide collection of industrial and commercial and lumping that into the 80 per cent cost that BC carries now, and keeping the residential down to about 20 per cent, leaving that pretty much, I gather, on a functionally broken-out kind of weighing of programs, is a much more accountable system in democratic terms, which is the third principle of accountability that I would have added to the two you put forward. I cannot imagine a system being less comprehensible than the one we have now; I guess that is what I am trying to say.

Mr Martin: I think that is what we tried to say in our brief as well.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I appreciate it. You covered the other question I had in your response.

Mr Keyes: Mr Lennox, I guess the reciprocal fraction in my books is that of a former teacher-principal who tried to lobby politicians in order to get more money from elected people, and now as an elected politician, I am trying to work with principals and teachers to get them to better understand the system of financing and education and at the same time try to make a few improvements.

Mr Lennox: I thought you were saying, "Now I aren't a problem."

Mr Keyes: Is that a genuine reciprocal fraction? I assume; perhaps.

I was happy that you mentioned the BC model in looking at the costing of education. We were just having some discussions about that and that is why I had written the question before we got far into your brief. My question was, who is to say what the cost of educating a child is, whether it be elementary or secondary? There had been this traditional gap between them. As elementary persons formerly, we used to say it probably took more to educate the primary child than the secondary. The purpose of the question disappeared as you supported the concept of trying to look at the genuine costs of education.

However, as you go through the brief, you oppose the government's concept of lot levies, the idea of pooling and the capital funding. I found most of the opposition in there—

Mr Jackson: They support your capital funding. The statement is right there.

Mr Keyes: Well—

Mr Jackson: They supported your statement. It is right there. They did.

Mr Keyes: I want to just ask a question. As you wish to increase the contribution by the government—you said it should be shared—have you looked at a way totally different from property tax? Have you looked at the income tax model, as has been recommended by some groups? Has that received any discussion?

Mr Lennox: The answer to your question is that yes, we have looked at the income tax. The problem you get into with financing education, as the select committee knows only too well, is that you cannot take apart one segment without affecting other segments to the funding. You either have to overhaul the entire thing, out of property tax, which is certainly not equitable across the province right now—when we looked at income tax on it, with the taxation coming on,

the federal GST, the increase in sales tax, we said, "No, let's not open this up right now," from the standpoint that we did not have the research facilities to explore it to a comfort level so that we could bring it forward to you and say, "Here is an alternative model." We simply do not have the facility or resources to do that. We opened the box and then closed the door back on it again.

Mr Keyes: It is the same problem we are faced with as a committee, but it is one that is raised continually as placing more of the burden on income tax, the ability to pay, so it is going to have to be looked at somewhere along the line.

In answer to that other part, when we deal with equity, we are talking about fairness in funding and so I think it can only be done by trying to develop the model of costing education. That will never be agreed to easily by the parties involved, whether it is the federations, the school boards or the municipalities. I think it has to be looked at and we should try to make a start in that direction, as they have done in BC.

1040

I just want to caution you, but I am sure you are aware, about the comparison with the other provinces on the basis of looking at the percentage of share, because it is the old story, are we comparing apples to oranges, to grapefruits or to whatever? What is included in costs provided by the province? I think that is an area where we have tried to see if we can come up with any more definitive comparison, merely to perhaps set straight some of the myth that we are almost at the bottom of handing out dollars and cents. But again, what is it for?

The only other one I would make you comment on is number recommendation 2, when you said maintain it "on an average of 60 per cent excluding capital funding and superannuation." Since these are genuine costs related to the provision of education, why in your brief did you not just increase the percentage that you are recommending and then include it? It is like saying to your wife—

Mr Mahoney: Or husband.

Mr Keyes: —or husband or spouse, "Well, I'm going to give you X dollars a week for the household," but excluding this, this and this. Why did you not become more all-inclusive?

Mr Martin: If I could answer that question, I think the point we are trying to make in this recommendation is that we have gone on past practice, and past practice states that capital expenditures and superannuation expenditures have in fact not been part of that percentage.

Everyone in this room and everybody in the educational system knows what 60 per cent means, and we hope the 60 per cent will mean what it was intended to mean back in the 1970s very shortly in the future of the 1980s and the 1990s.

Mr Keyes: I will just say that if you know what it means, we certainly have agreed that we do not know what it means because of approved or of total or of what, and we have had a lot of presentations to talk about approved, total and the rest of it.

The Chairman: Mr Mahoney has asked for a supplementary.

Mr Mahoney: I think Mr Keyes just asked it. Are you talking 60 per cent of a blank cheque?

Mr Martin: We are talking 60 per cent of the real cost of financing education in this particular province.

Mr Lennox: There are two components to that, Mr Mahoney. We know that we have \$1.9 billion in overceiling expenditures right now, so I think the select committee has to decide why there are overexpenditures before it can decide 60 per cent of what. I understand 60 per cent of approved, but I understand also that the ceilings are unrealistically low. If we set realistic ceilings, then we have got 60 per of approved unrealistic ceilings. I am not asking for a blank cheque, but I am asking for the cheque writer to be aware that other factors have to go into the cheque before he writes it.

Mr Mahoney: That is fair comment.

The Chairman: Just one point of clarification: You are talking 60 per cent of approved cost but with a proviso that the grant ceiling be raised.

Mr Mahoney: Change the approved cost.

Mr Keyes: Right; the ceilings.

Mrs O'Neill: First, gentlemen, I am happy that there is such an organization as yours, because as we have travelled and from some of the literature we have seen, there is a real concern that there are not enough men in elementary school education. You prove that this group is still strong, articulate and present. However, I want to bring a couple of things to your mind.

I have, as Mr Keyes has mentioned, a lot of difficulty with figure 2. You have all been in education a long time. I have been travelling to schools in Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and I would suggest that their best schools are somewhere in the medium range of our best schools. I think, in honesty, if you saw the resources of those provinces and what the

average student gets in an average day, it is very different from what happens in Ontario.

We also know there is much more centralized control and it is strictly a government policy issue. I have to agree with Mr Keyes that there is a lot of misunderstanding that can evolve from a situation like that.

I also have a lot of difficulty with your statements on what has happened to the Macdonald report. I think you have suggested, although I cannot find it in writing here, that there have only been one or two recommendations highlighted or acted upon. We have had a report, both from Dr Macdonald and the ministry on the report, and upwards of 20 of the recommendations are well in progress and, I think, should be acknowledged. Some of them have to do with elementary education.

I also have some difficulty in there being no acknowledgement in your brief that we have mandated lower pupil-teacher ratios in elementary schools. To overlook or not even mention that concerns me. It concerns me that there is no mention of junior and senior kindergarten. Your qualifications as elementary school teachers have never been in question by any member of this committee and, I would suggest, by any member of our government.

I do feel that the nonacknowledgement of textbook initiatives for elementary, junior science initiatives—certainly many of the dollars in special education go into elementary education. I do feel the gap is being closed some. It is not moving quickly enough, I presume, for your intent. I have some difficulty understanding "resource cost model." I am wondering if that is like program funding. Then I have one other question.

Mr Martin: I will refer to David for resource cost models.

Mr Lennox: I am very tempted to cover Yvonne's full question, but I will stick with the resource cost models. There was a question mark at the end of that?

Mrs O'Neill: There was no question mark. Those were statements that I wanted to place on the record, because I think it is important that primary education has had much attention and I think it has to be stated. But I have two questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Others have debunked that sort of suggestion.

Mr Lennox: The resource cost model parallels, to a great deal, school-based budgeting. When you come down to the school-based budgeting model for the individual schools, if

you continue it up to a board model, the situation has to come down that you can only start resource cost models if you determine the programs and the priorities of the government, the Ministry of Education.

Mrs O'Neill: Does that tie in with the Macdonald program recommendation? I guess that is really what I want to know.

Mr Lennox: Yes, it does.

Mrs O'Neill: I think the next question will likely give you a chance to respond to what I said earlier. What is the funding that you suggest has to have all of the voluntary fund-raising? In other words, what are the things that drive your over-ceiling costs? What do you see as the needs that are not attended to in the elementary education? I named several that I thought had been at least scratched and much more than that, in my opinion—maybe not yours. What are the things that you feel we have not looked at in elementary education that need the \$800 or whatever you are suggesting to close the gap?

Mr Martin: I can start the answer off and then, if David and Jean want to add to it, they can. One of the areas we have talked about to the select committee in the past is guidance counsellors in elementary schools. Obviously there has to be a large number of guidance counsellors if we are going to put one in every school in this province, which would probably be beneficial to the educational system.

Mrs O'Neill: Is that a goal to grade 6 or are you talking about grades 7 and 8?

Mr Martin: Our position is kindergarten to 8, any school, period.

Another area we have to look at is the arts. We do not have specialized teachers to teach music and phys ed, guidance, resource-centred models, etc. We need additional teachers to be able to address those areas. This government or a previous government mentioned Partners in Action, which we believe is a wonderful way to teach the resource centre; however, we do not have the funding or the teachers to be able to run that type of program.

If I can go into preparation time for the elementary teachers, it is finally being addressed by the boards of education across this province, and I believe we need another large influx of teachers to be able to get the preparation time the elementary teachers need in order to prepare properly for their classrooms. There are three issues right there.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much for being specific.

Mr Jackson: I would like to go back to some of the points that David Lennox raised with respect to accountability. I am interested, on page 28, about this single-panel funding. Actually, I had speculated at a meeting I spoke at about a month and a half ago, which I think you attended, David. Then the ministry presented its case a couple of weeks ago.

I wonder if you could elaborate on that point a little more fully and comment as well on what we are hearing from several groups before the committee with respect to the way in which the government has implemented some of its initiatives. Everybody in this room applauds the reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio in the primary division; there is not a person in the province who would not.

The problem was that the criticism arises from the political manner in which it was handled and where the funding finally arrived and how much and where there was a shortfall and so on. Several groups have indicated that other grades have had to take an upward adjustment in the PTR in order to cope with the shortfall.

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In my view, when you mention the word "auditing," somehow we have to have some more legitimate program auditing for purposes of protecting other grades from that kind of activity. Could you comment generally about that area? There is financial auditing but then there is program auditing that has financial implications.

Mr Lennox: In answer to your question, I will be very specific, because this will report back to Yvonne's question. The grades 1 and 2 initiative for most boards the first year ended up being a bit of a reward for good achievement in past practice.

Our federation did a tracking of every school, every classroom, every board in the province last year, and we found in those boards that had to reduce the class size in grades 1 and 2 increases in other classes, on average, by the board. So we are monitoring again this year and we have every district and every school in this province that will provide us with the information as to whether grades 1 and 2 are being decreased at the cost of grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. And we believe they are.

Therefore, that funding that went into grades 1 and 2 is being turned into the board to assist in holding down the mill rate, the taxes by the local ratepayers.

I will give you a very specific example, but I will keep the board nameless. Last year, when the science initiative money came out, a school

board simply said to its teachers: "Sorry, the science initiative money is going into our general revenue and not going towards science equipment, because we have already given you funding for science equipment in your general revenues you already have. Therefore, we'll keep the mill rate down in our board this way. When you have to report the audit to the Ministry of Education, tell them what you did for science with the money we already gave you." I find that that type of auditing, that type of system analysis from school boards—creative writing exercises are what I call them—is unacceptable to the teachers of Ontario.

Mrs O'Neill: I suggest to some extent that concerns me as a politician too, here.

Mr Jackson: We can do something about that then, can we not?

Mr Lennox: You certainly can.

Mr Jackson: One of the things we can do is be a little more realistic in terms of the manner in which we mandate programs and then we turn around on bended knee from the Treasurer. It seems that the political necessity to make the statement always precedes our ability to pay or come up with the money. I hearken back to Mr Mahoney's comment about the blank cheque, but I think you responded to that one spot-on, with respect to the notion that the provincially mandated programs are piercing ceilings in most cases and that that is what we have come to understand as the added pain threshold for taxpayers to have to pick up. There is a difference in various areas of the province as to how much pain they have to accept.

I do not want to get into the question of the 60 per cent. I, for one, believe it has outlived its usefulness as a target, but you do not like to replace one benchmark until you have another one clearly fixed in the minds of the public, so I will just ask you a general question. I have never asked this question before, but I would like to ask you what your sense of the select committee on education is at this point.

The reason I ask that is because when you mentioned the funding for guidance support, that was the recommendation to this committee which in turn was recommended to the minister, with specific language for increased funding. We have not heard a response from the ministry on that. I would like to get an honest sense from you of what your opinion is of how effective this committee has been to date. If you do not feel comfortable answering it, that is fine.

I recognize that one of your recommendations is that we become a standing committee of the

Legislature, a position that both Richard and I, as critics for our parties, support. Could you give us a sense of where you think we are proceeding on our agenda and the success which we may or may not be having in terms of effecting some policy?

Mr Martin: I guess if we have to measure success, we always measure it in small steps. I believe just the fact that education has been getting an airing in the province over the past two years is a positive step. I think that the more politicians in this province hear about the problems of education, the more chance we have of making changes as far as the government is concerned.

It is our belief and our hope that there will be, eventually, guidance counsellors at the elementary level; that the funding of elementary education will eventually become the equal of or at least equivalent to that of the secondary panel; that people like yourselves within this room will take it back to their parties and say that, yes, education is one of the most important things in any political setting. We will come back at any point in time to educational committees and make addresses like this, and hopefully eventually our word will be listened to.

I would say, keep it up.

Mr Jackson: I, for one, found very little fault with your brief and want to commend you for the information. You have obviously been monitoring our committee hearings and have brought to it some of the research that has been brought forward to date within the committee setting, so I think that is commendable.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Was that sort of a C, with some progress as a possibility?

Mr Jackson: A C minus, room for improvement?

Mr Martin: There is always hope.

The Chairman: Thanks, Mr Martin. It is good to hear that. Much to Mr Johnston's chagrin, we will not have to travel to British Columbia to get the commission report, because we did have it in our library. Our research is going to make copies of the accountability section plus the recommendation sections. If any members would like further information, this will be available from our research.

I would just mention before you go that there is one chart in here which clarifies the education structure in BC and the actual percentages. In 1988-89—they have broken it down—general provincial revenue going to education is 45.1 per cent, and then they add the nonresidential property tax, which as Mr Johnston mentioned,

was the commercial-industrial. That is 24.3 per cent, which brings it up to almost 70 per cent, and then I guess the rest of the 10 per cent is capital and other different additions.

It appears that they are quite comparable to Ontario with what comes from general revenue. The question we have to ask is whether we want to consider a system where commercial-industrial goes right into the provincial coffers.

Thank you very much for your presentation today. It has been very helpful to our deliberations.

The next presentation will be the Ontario Association for Continuing Education. Mrs Dobell, would you like to come up with your delegation? Welcome back to our committee.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Mrs Dobell: Thank you for having us back again. I will just remind you, although we all represent the association, who we are. I am Jane Dobell. In addition to the association, I am a trustee of the Ottawa Board of Education. This is Dr Alan Thomas, who is at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. We have Tom Matsushita here, who is a former superintendent of the Lincoln County Board of Education and currently a consultant for technical studies at the University of Toronto Faculty of Education; and Paul Blake, who is a former superintendent of the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board. We have tried to cover the base of the topic.

As representatives of our organization, we are here to ask you to include adult continuing education in your review of the financing of education. Because adult continuing education, as delivered by school boards, has in the past been considered a marginal service, all previous reviews of the financing of education, without exception, have ignored it. It has been a very minor thing, an add-on, an "if," never focused on as a central part of the delivery system.

A little history: You remember that in 1986, the splitting of the tax base at the high school level which accompanied the extension of the separate school threatened to create a barrier to diminish the access of undereducated adults to education. The Minister of Education, who was Sean Conway, responded by establishing a new higher level of provincial grant for continuing education.

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This, he stated, was intended to cover the full costs of the service so that—and this is almost a

quote—the tax base and residency would no longer be a barrier to access. He acknowledged that the actual costs might be higher but that they were not known. He therefore supported our task force, which concentrated on the broad policy issues, as well as Professor Lawton's study on the actual costs of the service. He promised to adjust the grants in future years to reflect the true costs.

It is two years later, two full years later, and the Ministry of Education has not publicly dealt with any of the issues raised in our report, Educating Adults, or in Professor Lawton's report. This seems to us very strange when you have the Premier's Council highlighting the importance of adult retraining and upgrading and when all representatives and aspects of our society, including business, agree that access to lifelong learning is essential. Meanwhile, the enrolments in the school board programs for adults in credit, literacy and English as a second language have mushroomed. It is a burgeoning phenomenon.

We are asking you to take advantage of the opportunity you have to influence government policy in this field of very growing importance. As Mr Conway and his deputy minister now represent both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skills Development, there is a unique opportunity to institute change, which we ask you to participate in.

My colleagues are going to speak to you in a minute about different specific aspects and then I will finish up just by reviewing the recommendations. Before they start, I want to emphasize one overriding principle: Adults must not be denied access to the educational program they need because of their residency or their tax base. Because most adults combine education with family and work responsibilities, they may for these reasons be unable to attend courses offered by the school board to which they pay taxes.

If the government decides, as we recommend in the case of credit programs, that it should place a greater part of the cost on the local taxpayer for the credit programs, then you must introduce regulations to preserve the adults' right of free access across geographical as well as coterminous jurisdictions. They must be able to get the course which is delivered at a place and a time they can attend and in a manner which suits their needs.

I will give a quick illustration—let's say Hamilton—where the workers are able to go to a course at 7:30 in the morning by special dispensation from the Ministry of Education,

starting before the eight o'clock hour when the school day is supposed to start. Many of the people come from the country, they come into the city, they take their course and then they go to work. They could not fit it into their day if they could not combine the work and the learning in that timetable. So you have to allow access across these jurisdictions to suit the adults' timetable.

I think we are going to start now with Paul on English as a second language.

Mr Blake: Madam Chair, my comments are not in front of you, and I apologize for that. I can make them available to your secretary within a few days.

The Chairman: Actually, they will be recorded for Hansard, so each member will have a copy of them.

Mr Blake: Thank you. I am going to deal specifically with one adult education program—namely, English as a second language for adult new Canadians—as provided by school boards. My comments will deal with the concept of English as a second language or French as a second language and the funding of these skills.

English as a second language is understood as the acquisition of a working knowledge of the official language of the country by new immigrants. By this definition, and for the sake of redundancy each time, FSL is understood whenever I use the term ESL.

The admittance of new immigrants to the country is a federal government undertaking and responsibility. Despite all the political rhetoric about the humanitarian duty to provide a place for the homeless, Canada's immigration policy is to accept only those with the skills to contribute to the Canadian economy. In other words, the recent new immigrants to Canada have, if not the English language facility, the educational and employment skills well beyond what can be described as basic education in this country. I think that is an important distinction to be made when we talk about funding.

Popular educational conceptualization tends to lump together English as a second language and adult basic education as a single concept and the funding of both by the exact same formula. From personal experience, I can say that the officials and the funding policies of the Ministry of Education treat ESL and ABE as one and the same.

The clients for ESL are educated, skilled individuals within their own country of origin, persons with enough knowledge and determination to seek the opportunities available to them in

Canada. They are enterprising, entrepreneurial persons wishing to take responsibility for their own destinies. Their needs are relatively short-term; namely, a working command of the language and the social security number by which they can be employed.

The clients for ABE, on the other hand, are those persons of Canadian origin who, for one reason or another, whether through personal circumstances or the failures of the educational system at the time they went to school, failed to acquire what we now define as basic education; namely, reading, writing and numeracy skills to a grade 8 level of competency. The numbers of such persons are large, one in five, as people told us through the last Canadian census. The addressing of their needs is long-term.

If and when we accept the distinction between the need for ESL and ABE, the financing of each will take on slightly different characteristics. Taxpayer funding for ESL is politically more acceptable than for ABE. Unfortunate as this is, the inclusion of ESL with ABE is detrimental to the former. We seem to accept the fact that when Canada grants immigrant status, the country has a responsibility to help the immigrant acquire the language of the country and quite unaltruistically begin to pay his own way in the country.

The general reaction to ABE is one of incredulity first, and second, if such persons do exist, the responsibility or blame somehow rests with that individual. For the person needing ESL, the need is immediate and urgent. The time involvement is relatively short-term and determinate. The responsibility for funding, we believe, rests primarily with the federal government and secondarily with the province in which the person resides and will become a productive citizen.

The federal and provincial citizenship and language training agreement needs to be maintained beyond this year, updated in content, intent, funding and accountability. Under the existing concept of education, a ministry providing the basic educational tools needed by the citizens, popularly interpreted as being those individuals who are youthful, with the potential to become citizens, English as a second language for adults does not belong. It rightfully belongs with those ministries responsible for citizenship and immigration.

In summary, ESL is a legitimate government responsibility but should be shared federally and provincially. But the funding for new, unemployed immigrants should be 100 per cent, which it hardly seems necessary to state. Second, the

concept should be divorced from that of basic education as provided by the province. It can neither be equated to the basic education which is understood as the right of the young, nor for adult basic education, often seen as a potential financial infringement on those rights for the young.

Finally, we are advocating the financing of adult ESL from sources other than the Ministry of Education. We are also definitely recommending the maintenance of school boards as one of the principal providers of that service. Dr Thomas will address that point later in his comment.

Mrs Dobell: I think we are going to go, though, to Mr Matsushita first on the credit side and give Dr Thomas the wrapup.

1110

Mr Matsushita: Ladies and gentlemen of the select committee, I admire your stamina. You have been at this, I know, for a little while and in the past three weeks, of course, you have heard many, many submissions, all to do with finance.

Jane Dobell, the trustee from Ottawa, is a very coercive person. She asked me to come and speak about a particular program which is very near to my heart from my past experiences. The report that you received on educating adults is very important to the discussion on finances, obviously. I would like to just highlight two or three scenarios that I see coming out of that report if some of the things were adopted about credit programs. Then I want to talk about the actual financial part itself.

If the recommendations in that particular report were in fact adopted, we could see the Ministry of Education would articulate, through legislation and the regulation of policy statements, the rights of adults to educational programs offered through school boards. At the moment, that kind of policy does not exist.

We could also see that the ministry will show its further commitment by providing funds for operational as well as actual capital costs for adults in credit programs on an equitable basis to regular day school adolescents. That would be my argument this morning.

We also see that school boards would be required to meet the educational needs of their adult population by offering their own programs or buying programs from other agencies.

We also see that the school day would no longer be limited to a time limitation, but in fact it would be expanded to allow courses to be offered in the day or evening best suited to the needs of the total student population, as Jane Dobell earlier stated.

We also see a scenario where teachers of credit courses may choose or be assigned to teach at various times of the day to complete their contractual requirements.

Those would be some of the major highlights regarding the credit programs of the so-called continuing education program.

As you know, at the moment, the present funding allows for \$2,065 for an average daily enrolment for continuing education students. It is a flat grant to school boards.

I was doing some work on this in the last day and a half after Jane called. I looked at a typical school board like the Lincoln County Board of Education, with approximately 20,000 students and 1,500 teachers, and how it would be affected in terms of going to a full-cost program with regard to local taxation as well as provincial grants.

As I stated, at the moment they receive \$2,065 from average daily enrolment. The Lincoln county board's rate of grant is approximately 49 per cent to 50 per cent. It is actually 49.6 per cent. Of course, the ceiling rate is \$4,122. If you take the actual rate of grant and the ceiling grant they receive from the Ministry of Education, it works out to \$2,046. So, in effect, the amount of money coming from the government for the continuing education grant of \$2,065 and the amount of money coming from the government for the daytime students is approximately the same—\$20 apart.

Of course, the difference comes in where we have a definition for average daily enrolment quite different in the evening for continuing education programs as opposed to the day programs. In the evening program for continuing education grants, the average daily enrolment is based on 970 hours of student time. In the daytime program, it is based on the fact that a student is a full-time student as long as he attends 151 minutes per day or at least is enrolled in school for 151 minutes per day. In looking at past figures, as a former principal of a high school, I can see that the average student would take perhaps seven credits per year, 110 hours per credit, so it works out to about 770 hours per year. In other words, you are comparing 970 hours as opposed to 770 hours, for grant purposes.

If the full grant system were adopted for a school board such as the Lincoln county board, which had 355 average daily enrolment through the continuing education program, then I could see the local share of the actual cost of educating students would be about \$1.5 million. The

recommendation you will see in the last page of the material handed out this morning talks about the fact that although we recognize that equal funding should be available for both daytime and evening programs, to thrust that whole equitable funding to local taxpayers in one fell swoop would be very difficult. There has to be a proper lead-in time.

As we talk about equitable funding between daytime and evening programs, there are, I would suggest, at least three or four questions to consider.

1. Are we going to calculate for the average daily enrolment on the same basis between day school and evening school? I have already pointed out the discrepancy.

2. If, at the moment, we have full-time day school students who attend an evening school or summer school for an extra credit, we are allowed extra grants. Are we going to then say a full-time student is a full-time student regardless of when he attends, and will we actually be given grants or not for any extra credits he takes?

3. This question would be, of course, about teachers. Are they going to be contractual teachers teaching right through, and will they have the option of teaching either evening school or day school to fill their contractual requirements?

4. Full services in terms of the evening program for adults: Will they get the full service of special education, transportation grants and day care services? Are they also going to be available?

It is obviously not an easy question to answer, but it will certainly have to be looked at prior to making a decision on this whole notion of funding for continuing education.

Dr Thomas: Madam Chairman and committee members, this is our third appearance and we are pleased with the growth in sophistication of the exchange since our first appearance. We would also like to compliment the committee on having taken on the mystique of the Canadian summer by recommending a 12-month school. You have already discovered how powerful a belief that is, but my guess is that it is not insuperable and we have done what we could to support that idea since you first announced it.

There are a number of straight pieces of information that we thought we would like to remind you of. Whatever the provincial policy or the general public level of discussion and attitude to the education of adults is, or has been, the fact is that adults have discovered the school boards and school boards have discovered adults in a

very substantial way. As of 1987, there were 153,000 students in the secondary school system in Ontario 19 years and older in the credit program. That is 20 per cent of the credit population in the Ontario secondary schools, and a growth of one per cent over the previous year.

Another adjacent piece of information that might serve you as some armour against some of the more reckless arguments about dropouts is that you might pay attention to the category in the provincial statistics related to re-entrance, which is a category that was introduced in 1984 and which, between 1982-83 and 1986-87, grew from 30,000 to 73,000. Those are people, most of them 19 years and older, who have returned to the secondary schools and this makes up more than half the number of what the Ontario statistician calls politely "retirements" during the same year. So a very large number of people are using the opportunity of a flexible school system which allows them to utilize it in ways that are most suitable to the circumstances of their own lives.

The issue of general interest courses is one that we dealt with at some length in the report that I think we have just distributed to you. I shall not go into it other than to argue that one of the unanticipated consequences we have noticed of the increased funding for adult students where it has occurred, such as in the grantable courses of Mr Conway, has been to reduce the autonomy of the local board. We think this trend is one that ought not to go unnoticed or unquestioned, and therefore are arguing that the boards themselves need some opportunity to make the decision between a course that is wholly of a personal benefit, and therefore ought to be paid for by the individual, and a course that is of a community benefit and therefore needs to be at least shared, if not totally paid for, by the government.

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With respect to literacy, we would simply like to draw your attention to something that seems to be clearly emerging. Literacy is not a permanent acquisition. Despite the fact that most of us in this room have reached the top of the educational ladder by becoming literate and live in a world which continues to reinforce our literacy skills, many people in this province and in the rest of the world do not live in such a world. It is quite wrong, in our opinion, to criticize the secondary schools for the rate of adult literacy in this province. It is quite likely that many of the people now rated as functionally illiterate were, in fact, literate when they left school, but they have lived in an environment in which there was no demand

for their skills of literacy so they have lost them. The point of this is to argue that notions of total literacy in Ontario by the year 2000 or 2001 are perhaps useful for inflammatory purposes, but not very accurate or very valuable. The fact is that we will continue to need the opportunity for adults to improve their literacy skills as they move from one area of occupation or one style of life to another. The notion of a blitz to make us all for ever literate is quite unreal and unlikely to succeed.

Finally, we would simply suggest to you that the pattern of the education of adults in Canada and in most of the developed world at the moment is very much the same as the pattern of the education of children at the turn of the century. The wealthy adults buy their own resources, the middle-class adults get access to public resources, and increasingly those adults who did not succeed the first time around in the education system are getting little or nothing. The school system, particularly the school board, is the one vehicle that stands in the way of that particular pattern maintaining itself and increasing.

Mrs Dobell: I would like to point you to the recommendations, which summarize what we have said. The first four recommendations merely urge you to take this topic on as one of your focuses.

We would ask you in doing so to invite further presentations from those who deliver the service. We realize it is a complicated issue and we are sorry that more people have not come forward on their own, but there are organizations which we could suggest you might invite to come before you and speak about it.

Third, we hope you will pick up this report, which has been around for two years, and Professor Lawton's report. I understand he has tabled his report with you. The issues are outlined there, so we hope you will review them and deal with them.

Fourth, because all this is out of date and the scene is moving so quickly in terms of costs, in terms of enrolment trends, we would ask the Ministry of Education to table with you whatever information is currently known about increased costs and enrolment trends. We do not have access to it, but we feel you should have access to it if you are to make a determination.

Our fifth recommendation states that when the Education ministry goes to Management Board to get its dollars for the education envelope, it should not have to be seen to be competing with English as a second language and literacy. Those

social and economic needs may be met by programs for which the school board is a delivery agent—not the only delivery agent; one of a team of people delivering these things. There must be separate recognition by your Treasury board that these are a separate need so the poor old Education department is not seen to be trading kids versus adults all the time. I think that is an important concept.

The sixth recommendation, on our last page, makes Tom Matsushita's point that if you are going, as we recommend in this report and elsewhere, to require a local taxation share for the credit program—and we do not recommend it for ESL or adult basic education but we do recommend it for the credit program—there must be two conditions. You just cannot do it overnight.

One is, you have to bring it in in the context of a clear and comprehensive policy for adult education provided by school boards, and the provisions have to include the right of adults to receive services from school boards, services that are designed to meet the adults' needs, not just services for a different clientele. The mandate of the school board has to be clearly outlined as including the provision for adult students.

The second condition is you have got to give the lead time for consultation and for local boards to understand the effects of the new policy, to suggest modifications and to adjust their delivery system. You cannot turn a whole economic enterprise around within a year. There has got to be a lead-in time. Those are our summary comments.

The Chairman: Thank you for your very interesting comments and your valuable insight into needed reforms in this whole area. As usually happens when we have interesting presentations, we have got approximately two minutes left and a number of questioners, so I ask members to be very succinct. We start with Mr Reycraft, Mr Johnston and Mr Jackson.

Mr Reycraft: Thank you for your presentation. I want to address what I perceive to be an inequity that is developing because of the way boards are implementing adult education programs in the province. I will start by asking you if there is a consistent definition of adult continuing education that is being used by boards across the province.

Mrs Dobell: I would have to say that is a very interesting topic. Is there a definition—no, there is not.

Mr Reycraft: There is no consistent definition?

Mrs Dobell: I think that is fair.

Dr Thomas: I think essentially what definition there is is based on the funding activities of the ministry.

Mr Reycraft: Is there anything that prevents a board from reporting continuing adult students as regular students eligible for the general legislative grant if the courses are presented between nine and four o'clock?

Mrs Dobell: No, and most boards do that.

Mr Reycraft: So those boards are perfectly within their rights to require nonresident students to pay tuition in order to be able to attend those courses, is that right?

Mrs Dobell: No. Coterminous boards have equal or open access, of course, but there are regulations—which I cannot quote off the top of my head, but someone like Yvonne O'Neill will remember them—which govern whether you can cross the geographical boundary during the daytime and claim that your sending boards pay the costs. It has to do with, "Is there room, is it the nearest school and will the superintendent say it is okay?" There are restrictions on that.

Mr Reycraft: But that also depends on the policy of the board that is involved, does it not? Boards set their own policies on what they will—

Mrs Dobell: Yes, some boards will do it and some boards will not. What happens is the adult is at the mercy of whatever is being decided up there.

Mr Reycraft: Am I also right that boards which are offering continuing adult programs after regular school hours can only collect the \$2,065 per student for that and cannot charge nonresident fees?

Mrs Dobell: Once there is a grant, there is no fee. You are correct. If you accept the grant for a continuing education, you may not charge the student a fee and you may not charge another board a fee. I believe that to be the current situation.

Mr Reycraft: So then any board whose rate of grant is higher than the \$2,065 is better off financially if it reports the students just as regular secondary students and not as adult continuing education students, is that right?

Mrs Dobell: Yes, but their costs are different. If you are a regular secondary student, you are paying full-contract salaries to your teachers and your costs are quite different than if you are doing a continuing ed and are paying half-rates. You

will have to relate the costs of the different delivery systems before you have the equation. That is part of what I think you should talk to the ministry about.

I think you should read Professor Lawton on that. He is quite specific on it. One of the things he says is the reason the costs are so low for the continuing education mode of delivery is, first, you pay the teachers half and, second, you do not give the adults the level of service and some of the services, he says, that they need. They may not need them all but they need more than they are getting.

Mr Reycraft: The principle of the Minister of Education's announcement in 1986 was that all adults would have access to continuing education programs. It is obvious then that this principle is not being met in the province.

Mrs Dobell: It has been honoured by school boards in that there was a grandfather clause in that. The grandfather clause was that if your rate of grant was higher than this new thing would give, you could stay with the grandfathered, more valuable grant level, and so those without much assessment have done that.

That leaves the boards of education, mainly urban areas, with good assessment, whose costs are much higher but who have agreed to overlook it because they were serving so many of their own students that they could fit the other students into their large programs. But as the costs have started to go away, as the Minister of Education's grant has not gone up much—it has gone up four per cent a year, that kind of thing. But the costs are shooting up, particularly because the teachers are now going on full contract in many areas. These two figures are leading each other, so the problem now arises.

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Mr Reycraft: Do you know how many boards in the province are charging nonresident fees to students whose property taxes are not directed to that particular board?

Mrs Dobell: I could not tell you. In the Ottawa board, a third of our adult day students in continuing education, in our daytime high schools, come from outside the Ottawa boundary. I do not mean separate school. So a third of a figure of 1,100 people come from not only Carleton but Prescott and Russell, Cornwall and all over the place. They drive in to us because we are able to aggregate the number of students, which will offer them a full range of credit choice, without the correspondence method of delivery, which they may not want.

Mr Reycraft: Are they not required to pay tuition fees for that?

Mrs Dobell: No.

The Chairman: Mr Reycraft, because we are well behind schedule and we have two other presentations, could we move to Mr Johnston and Mr Jackson? Thank you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Actually, the member for Middlesex (Mr Reycraft) asked a number of the kinds of questions I was going to ask. I think your fourth recommendation is a very important starting spot for us; that is, we should be getting the information on the trends you are talking about. Also, if we could get that specific question the member for Middlesex just raised answered on a province-wide basis, that would be fascinating to have a look at.

Just two general thoughts I have are that, first, yes, the committee has to address the concerns of continuing education when it addresses financing, but also it strikes me that your other recommendation, that we pursue this in more depth following whatever we come up with, at this point makes an awful lot of sense, because the kind of analysis you gave us is something I had not heard before, and I really need to think through an awful lot more than I can in terms of trying to make recommendations next week for our committee report. I think those are two very helpful things for us.

The Lincoln board is a good example of a board which has had trouble going over ceiling in terms of its assessment base. As I recall, just from looking at the mix of things, they have often been used in tables for us as a public board that is very close to ceiling and has not gone over it.

What are the implications for that kind of board in terms of changing the funding? That was your example. They are already a board which seems pretty stretched to even try to meet the same quality of program, if I can put it that way, as other neighbouring boards, if not coterminous boards.

Mr Matsushita: It is very difficult for me to answer your question directly, simply because I am not, obviously, representing that board. I just used that as an example of the kinds of costs that might come about. In terms of the actual costs of educating a secondary school student in Lincoln, for instance, yes, it is quite a bit higher, obviously, than the ceiling, so when you get right down to the cost of including adults in that whole mix, I am not sure what the implications would be on the ceiling itself, or at least the cost of funding or the cost of educating an adult there. I really could not tell you that. I am sorry.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other one is a philosophical question. I know we are in a rush, so I will have to catch you afterwards for more detail on that, but your item 6a, looking at the future of funding, basically says that an adult should, as a right, be able to say, "I want an educational service for myself." And yet we make the distinction for English as a second language as being sort of outside the bucks that should be coming through the Ministry of Education.

I understand the distinctions that were being made, but I am wondering if there is any kind of contradiction there as we move to the new system where, in fact, some kind of—given the move in literacy that we all have and the various components of literacy that are out there, whether or not there is any contradiction. I would just like you to address that a little bit for me, because I have not put my mind to that much at all.

Dr Thomas: You are absolutely right, there is a contradiction there. It falls, as far as we believe at the moment, within the category of tolerable contradictions. The fact is there are always going to be interests that affect the need for some education in the adult population that is going to be in the interests of some other substantive interest in the society, such as health. So there is always going to be the need to draw on other than educational budgets to meet particular needs, and those other educational budgets will change from time to time. Sometimes it will be health, sometimes it will be immigration, but it is unreasonable, we think, to have the entire burden borne within the single category of education. So yes, there will be contradictions and they are livable with.

Mrs Dobell: I would like to comment on that. Coming down here, we got all ready and then I phoned the secretary of state just to check on the citizenship-language training agreement and textbook agreement. "Oh," said the civil service informant, "did you not hear, they are terminating it in March?" I said, "No, I did not hear. Who is going to do it?" He said, "Whatever funding now comes federally will come from the Department of Employment and Immigration." I cannot comment, but they have made this decision that the secretary of state who normally funds education in the transfer with the provinces, they are going out of that and they are handing it to the Department of Employment and Immigration.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is a very scary development, the more you learn the details of it.

Mr Jackson: No less frightening than the consequences of similar and potentially inappropriate decisions that might be made provincially. When I think of the phasing-out of skills development and loading it into education without proper fiscal protection, I can see getting caught in a debate on lifelong learning. As you probably are aware, the Liberal Party, at its congress next January or February, is devoting 50 per cent or better of all its resolutions to lifelong learning. So it is apparent that the track for the next provincial election is in this whole concept of adult education. Education will be all things to all people, it is just that I am worried about who is going to pay for it.

Recognizing the realities of federal funding and restraint, words that are not mutually exclusive any more, it is apparent that the local property taxpayer may be called upon to absorb more and more of those expenses. That is why I find your tolerable contradiction less a contradiction because it recognizes those other realities. You might want to react to that, but I have a healthy scepticism about the move of skills development and its implications to our schools, and the pioneer work of Jane Dobell.

My real question, Alan—

Dr Thomas: I knew you were getting somewhere.

Mr Jackson: I wanted that on the record because I am very much concerned about manpower needs far exceeding the needs for women in northern Ontario to get a better self-worth through upgrading. Because there is not the employment imperative, we tend to allow that to lapse, and I find that inappropriate in terms of our social direction.

Dr Thomas: So do we.

Mr Jackson: My question really has to do with your compliment on our approach to year-round education. During those hearings, I tried to ask several questions about the implications for adult education, which vary by jurisdiction in the United States by the nature of their structures. Have you had an opportunity to put in context your sense of vision for adult education and continuing education in Ontario and how that might fit into a model of year-round education? I know that is a large subject, but can you just briefly hit on some pluses, some cautionary notes, some of the ideas that we might continue to carry with us or almost, in a sense, link back your presentation today with our last report.

Dr Thomas: Any one of my three colleagues may want to respond to this. It seems to me that if one added up our three presentations to the committee, you would find something approaching that kind of global outlook that you are looking for.

I would suspect one observation we would make is that when you vary the age composition of the student body, you vary everything. You cannot just add them on and expect that the system will remain the way it is. When you start dealing with large numbers of older students, you vary the teaching skills required, you vary the administrative skills, and as far as we can tell, you vary not only the financial practices but the financial opportunities.

I did try to arrange to have the committee members sent a copy of the last survey done by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education which was published in Orbit. I hope it arrived. What it indicates very clearly is that people who see the school system as being of direct value to them, either through their children or for themselves, are at the moment willing to increase their contribution to the cost of education. How that is done, of course, is another matter.

I did also want to draw your attention—I hoped the committee would have some chance to pay attention to it—to the fact that there has just been completed an evaluation of the equivalent-standing-for-mature-students policy of the present educational system, which is enormously interesting in terms of the freedom it provides for women, who make enormous use of it as a means of re-establishing themselves in the greater community.

Any of my colleagues may want to reply to that.

The Chairman: If you could be very brief. We are already 15 minutes behind in your presentation time.

Mr Blake: I might comment that when we started our program in Hamilton in 1986, we felt that we had to run it on a 12-month basis, and we have. Adults just simply do not come until 28 June and wait for 5 September. The 28 June comes and the summer session starts on 1 July. Some of the same people are there and you have new people. I think the adults have already bought the 12-month concept and will not accept anything less than that.

Mr Jackson: That is the answer I was looking for.

Mrs Dobell: I would like to say—and I know you are now pressing on—that we have recognized, as you recognize, that this is not an easy

matter and if you are going to look at it, it will require some further attention. If we can be of any further help in commenting on any proposals you may want to know the implications of, or in suggesting other groups whom you might want to hear from based on certain questions, we would be delighted either to come back ourselves or suggest who might also be called.

The Chairman: Thank you for that very generous offer and also for your contribution to our committee today.

The next presentation will be the Citizens for Property Tax Reform. Welcome back to our committee, although I notice you are now under a new, improved name. You were formerly the City of Toronto's Residents' Liaison Committee on Assessment Reform.

Mr Milbrandt: That was the old group that we worked with.

The Chairman: If you would like to start by introducing your committee delegation members for the benefit of Hansard, then you may begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

CITIZENS FOR PROPERTY TAX REFORM

Mr Milbrandt: I am George Milbrandt. To my right is Dale Ritch, and the person on the far right is Storm MacGregor. As was the case last time, we have, as Storm would say, a brief brief with an attachment to it that supports some of the recommendations we have made. I would like to turn it over to Storm so that he can share with the members of the committee various points that we make in the brief.

Mr MacGregor: When we were here last year on 25 July, we were speaking on behalf of the City of Toronto's Residents' Liaison Committee on Assessment Reform. We said at that time that a review of education philosophy and fundamental goals could only be meaningful if the resources to make them a reality were dealt with at the same time.

The urgency of this issue has now been brought into focus by the recent debate on market value reassessment. The provincial government is now in a situation where it has been requested by Metro Toronto council to remove expenditures pertaining to education from the property tax base. The issue about future financing of education is in fact an issue about property tax reform, and property tax reform can only be fair and true if funding for education is removed from the property tax base.

Metro Toronto pays for all its public education costs from the property tax base, yet the boards in Metro Toronto are faced with many extra

burdens. Special language programs are just one example.

More than 5,000 students in Scarborough alone did not get the language assistance they needed in 1987 because of lack of funding.

Nearly 25 per cent of all refugees and immigrants who come to Canada each year settle in Metro Toronto. In 1987, almost 4,600 students who could not speak English enrolled in Toronto schools, thus creating an extra burden on the Toronto board.

Approximately 18,000 students in North York require special English programs. About 4,500 are refugees who often need extensive and expensive training in adjusting to Canada before you can even begin to teach them English.

The cost of providing these services has not been isolated, just as we do not know how much it costs the city of Toronto to provide programs for the deaf, programs for the orthopaedically handicapped, programs for illiterate adults and programs in special vocational training, to name a few.

Many of these programs are used by other municipalities within Metro through a system that allows them to purchase this service for a transfer fee. This transfer fee may not come even close to covering the cost. We do not know because of the accounting system.

What we do know, however, is that Toronto pays 100 per cent of the cost of public education. We are also painfully aware of the fact that the current municipal tax system does not reflect the individual taxpayer's ability to pay. Property taxes based on so-called market value do not reflect the ability to pay.

We have three basic objectives:

1. The quality of education should be the same in every municipality in Ontario.
2. Funding for education should not be based on local property taxes, but instead reflect the individual taxpayer's ability to pay.
3. Local government services should continue to be administered by locally elected officials regardless of the proportion of funding provided by provincial or federal levels of government.

Our recommendations are based on the Report of the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario, the so-called Macdonald report, of 1985:

1. We support the recommendation, "That the government of Ontario affirm its financial commitment toward the funding of education and that it move toward contributing 60 per cent of the approved costs." That is recommendation 23 of the Macdonald report.

2. We support the recommendation, "That the government of Ontario introduce an education property tax credit program for residential and farm ratepayers and that the program be financed by an education tax on personal income." That is recommendation 24 of the Macdonald report.

3. We oppose the recommendation, "That the government of Ontario require that payments in lieu of taxes be shared equitably among school boards and municipalities." That is recommendation 17 of the Macdonald report. A review of the current situation should be undertaken and payments in lieu of taxes should continue to be made to the municipalities where these facilities are located until the issue of funding for education and the problem of property taxes has been resolved.

4. We oppose the recommendation, "That the province determine each year commercial and industrial assessment mill rates which will yield the total local revenues accruing from the current levies on such assessment, and that such local revenues be used to calculate general legislative grants payable to school boards up to the approval level of expenditures, and that such mill rates be adjusted annually." That is recommendation 21 of the Macdonald report.

5. We also recommend that the report on province-wide pooling that was completed in the fall of 1987 by a special committee set up to study the impact on the school boards should be released by the Ministry of Education and a review of Metro Toronto pooling be undertaken.

The urgency for fair and true property tax reform, and the need to remove funding for education from the property tax base, has never been greater.

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The Chairman: Do you have any additional comments before we go to questions?

Mr Ritch: Yes, I am going to speak and then George Milbrandt. Then we will take any questions.

The debate on market value reassessment in Metro overhangs this discussion about education funding in a way I do not think too many members of the committee have perhaps thought directly about. This issue, which was passed by rather ambiguous motion by Metro council, will in fact soon be before the members of the Legislature because it will require a number of amendments to various acts in order to become reality. You will soon be taking a direct look at the reassessment issue. I just want to make that point because it does overhang this discussion about education funding.

In fact, we are approaching a crisis situation in the province with regard to the levying of property taxes to pay for education and other social services.

Metropolitan Toronto now pays 100 per cent of the cost of financing the public education system from its property tax base. The contingent funding proposals for pooling of the commercial assessments that the provincial government will soon be bringing into effect suggest that the province's next move will perhaps be to shift the burden of funding 100 per cent of the separate school system in Metro on to the local property tax base.

Metro council last year wrote a document called *The Crumbling Financial Partnership* which showed a massive shift of provincial funding responsibilities on to the property tax base from the provincial government. The freeze on unconditional grants and the underfinancing of social services such as day care, seniors' housing, etc, pushed on to the property tax base last year a sum of almost \$70 million, and by 1993 that sum will be up in the range of somewhere between \$125 million and \$200, depending upon how the mill rate goes, etc. Furthermore, the province intends to levy a per-square-footage commercial real estate tax starting in 1990, I believe, which would take from the property tax base in Metro at least \$100 million, a conservative estimate.

Across Metropolitan Toronto, ratepayers were faced this year, 1989, with mill rate increases of a minimum of 11 per cent up to a maximum of 14 per cent, depending upon the municipality in which you lived. These large mill rate increases, which are doubling the rate of inflation in Toronto, are likely to continue over the next two years when you take a look at the way the province is shifting the burden to the local level, and also the wage increases that local workers have been bargaining in the last year and will continue to bargain. We are looking at fairly massive mill rate increases in Metro Toronto of, I would say, a minimum 10 per cent over the next two years.

I would like to remind the members of the committee that education costs in Metro now account for a full 55 per cent of the revenues that are raised through the property tax.

We now have two fully funded public school systems in the province as a legacy of Bill 30, competing with each other, providing parallel services and with duplicated administrative infrastructures to finance. Up until now, we have been able to finance these systems because the

provincial revenues have been robust because of the speculative commercial and residential real estate boom that is just now ending.

This is a very important point for members of the committee to consider. The residential resale and new housing market has appeared to have collapsed in southern Ontario. We are looking now at the pending collapse of the commercial real estate market. Also, we know that the auto industry, which is the main creator of jobs in Ontario, is ready for a severe decline.

The question we would like to raise here is, can we really afford to continue to finance two competing school systems largely from a property tax base if the economy goes into a serious downturn, which appears more and more likely? Not only are we facing that question; we are also now facing the spectre of a property tax revolt across the province, and certainly in Metropolitan Toronto, in the next two years. I think members are well aware of the debate that took place this summer regarding the market value reassessment issue in Metro.

What we are proposing is a new way of financing the cost of the education system in Ontario. We are saying, "Remove the burden that is now on the residential property tax." I want to make it clear what we are saying here because people have misunderstood our positions or misrepresented them. There are three aspects to financing education, three sections right now. The figures I am going to give are based on 1985 because those are the only figures we have had access to.

In 1985, the total cost of funding the education system in Ontario was \$6.8 billion. Of that, 46 per cent of the cost came from direct provincial grants, \$3.1 billion. Residential and farm property taxes paid 32 per cent, which was \$2.2 billion. Commercial and industrial property taxes paid \$1.5 billion, which was 22 per cent.

I think the Macdonald commission report should be must reading for anybody in the education business in Ontario because I think this document contains the blueprint the government is following right now. Also, this recommendation we have extracted from this commission document in fact is contrary to the whole thrust of the recommendations in the report. I do not know why the commission put that in there, exactly, or how it got in there but to me it seems contrary to all the other recommendations of the commission, which I think the government is generally implementing over a period of time. But it is none the less an option Macdonald talked about and put figures on, and we have embraced it.

In this report, there were essentially three funding options that the Macdonald commission put forward. We are supporting option B. This is a funding option that would fund education based on provincial grants, property taxes for commercial and industrial assessment and revenues from an education tax on personal income.

What we are saying is that two thirds of the equation should remain the same; that is, the direct grants from the province, which of course we would like to see increased from 46 per cent to a minimum of 60 per cent, and the part that comes from the commercial and industrial property taxes we want to see maintained. The third part of the triad which is the part that comes from residential and farm property taxes we would like to see replaced with an education tax on personal income, which in 1985 figures accounted for \$2.2 billion, 32 per cent of the total burden.

If the government raised its portion of education funding to 60 per cent from 46 per cent—I believe that percentage is even lower now, perhaps down around 43 or 44 per cent—then the amount that would have to be paid for by this personal income tax on education would be down to about 18 per cent of the total, which in 1985 dollars would be \$1.25 billion.

I would just quickly like to read you a couple of excerpts from the Macdonald commission report because I think the arguments in favour of what we are proposing are put here as clearly as I have ever seen them and I could not hope to do better.

"In one alternative that we pondered, we sought to replace the residential property tax with a tax that would ensure equal sharing of the burden of funding according to ability to pay. Such an alternative tax, we thought, could take the form of a special charge on an individual's personal income.

"The main arguments in favour of raising funds for education from a tax on personal income relate to the principle of fairness. Such a tax is perceived to be more equitable than one on property; because every individual benefits from the excellence of Ontario's education system, everyone would pay in accordance with the increase or decrease in his or her command over goods and services during the year....

"One household might contribute several times over through its number of wage earners rather than its assessment as the property of one individual. An income tax could be collected through regular payroll deductions, and it represents a broader tax base while enhancing

universality. It would also alleviate the current problems of property assessment.

"The potential for income redistribution based upon a shift to a more equitable sharing of the tax burden is significant. It would also soften the impact of the property tax upon families at a stage when a high proportion of their disposable income goes into housing."

Just another excerpt: "Education in Ontario would be financed through three major sources: provincial grants from the consolidated revenue fund (46 per cent); property taxes from commercial and industrial assessment (22 per cent); and an education tax on personal income (32 per cent), the latter effectively replacing the existing residential and farm property taxes.

"From the latest available data in Ontario finance, personal income is estimated at \$153.5 billion for 1985-86. In order to replace the current \$2.2 billion residential and farm property taxes, the charge on the \$153.5 billion personal income would be approximately 1.4 per cent. This tax rate could be applied uniformly to all levels of incomes or be graduated from one per cent to two per cent according to successively higher income levels. Of course, these rates would need to be adjusted or corrected annually to reflect fluctuating income and expenditure totals year to year."

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Another excerpt: The way it would work is: "Therefore, residential and farm ratepayers would be eligible to claim a property tax credit from the province equal to an approved portion of the education property taxes paid to the local school boards. This rebate could be incorporated into the annual personal income tax as a part of Ontario's calculation. The existing Ontario property tax credit program for the municipal portion could be continued for Ontario residents with low incomes. It seems appropriate and administratively feasible to incorporate a separate provision whereby residential ratepayers could claim a full or a partial credit on the education property taxes paid during the taxation year."

Those are the excerpts from the Macdonald commission report that I think argue our case very well.

In conclusion, I just want to reiterate again the seriousness of the crisis facing us and the fact that the economy is now facing a downturn that could happen fairly quickly. In fact, do we have the money? Do we have the financing to pay for two education systems at the levels at which they exist, and can we continue to put the burden on

the residential property tax base the way it is, knowing full well that there is a massive property tax revolt brewing in the province?

Regarding the property tax revolt, there are two directions this could go. It could be like proposition 13 in California where people say: "Enough is enough. We are not going to pay any more." In my opinion, that situation in California was very bad for the education system. I think that is a consensus. It entailed a massive shift to the commercial and industrial sector as well as a severe underfunding of the educational institutions in California. We do not support that type of a property tax revolt.

We are supporting the type of change in the funding of education so that the burden goes where it belongs, which is on those people who can afford to pay for it, and away from the current iniquitous system that we have where it is based largely on the property tax base in a manner that has no basis and representation in ability to pay.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Ritch. I just want to clarify a point regarding number two of your objectives, where you say that funding for education should not be based on local property taxes but instead reflect the individual taxpayer's ability to pay. By local property taxes, are you restricting yourself to just the residential portion?

Mr Ritch: Residential and farm.

The Chairman: So you are not talking local property taxes. You are just talking about the residential portion of them. Commercial and industrial still would pay for education.

Mr Ritch: Yes. As was stated in the Macdonald report, we are just talking about the residential-farm part. The commercial-industrial would continue to pay as they are paying right now.

Mr Milbrandt: I had a couple of comments I wanted to make. One of the points that I think the Macdonald commission report makes quite clearly and that I want to reiterate—Dale and Storm have covered most of the other points fairly thoroughly—is that one of the reasons for continuing to collect a property tax locally, as recommended in the Macdonald report, and yet have a tax credit is so that you have local control. That is very important.

Also, that means that nonresident property owners still pay their fair share. If you have a nonresident-of-Ontario property owner, that individual would still pay property tax. It would be the residents then who could claim the credit against their income tax in the province. That is a good point that Macdonald makes, and that is one

of the reasons we felt this combination of a credit and an across-the-province income tax provision for education makes much more sense than some other proposals that could come forward in this direction.

There are two other points related to this that were not brought up. We feel it would be useful that the current statistics contained in the Macdonald commission report be brought up to date. Those statistics are a number of years old and it would be very useful for purposes of discussion if we had current statistics in terms of personal income and some of the other figures used, particularly as they relate to the recommendations we have made.

Another point I would like to make is that we feel very strongly that there should be public hearings for any changes. We feel, first of all, of course, that there should be changes in the property tax and the way it is used for financing public education, as we have outlined. Related to that, though, we feel very strongly that there should be public hearings related to this. I will just leave it at that.

Mr Keyes: You gentlemen present a fairly strong case to support recommendations of the Macdonald commission, but you reject a few. You may want to just touch on that.

I guess I want to zero in on the commercial-industrial assessment. You still support that being used, but you have not seemingly said in there whether you want it done on a regional or province-wide basis. I want to see how, in your support of the Macdonald commission, you see trying to meet this equality of educational opportunity. You arrive at the problem between the rich and poor boards and assessment areas of the province. I did not quite see your answer on that.

Mr Ritch: The system we are supporting would mean that an education system would not be facing a handicap because it had an absence of a healthy industrial-commercial base, which is now definitely the case in Ontario.

Mr Keyes: But you would have to go beyond that. Do you believe the commercial-industrial assessment should bear a burden? I want to find out whether it should be shared.

Mr Ritch: Yes. We are saying we want to maintain the status quo with regard to the commercial-industrial base and the way it is paying in terms of funding the education system. We see a fundamental difference between levying property taxes on residential and levying property taxes on industrial-commercial. In fact, the Ministry of Revenue uses totally different

methods for working out the assessments. We think there is a strong argument to be made that a home should not be taxed with the same philosophical point of view as a business or an industry, definitely.

Mr Keyes: I see that. I guess I am still not getting my answer. I do not know whether I am just not hearing this morning.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it regional or province-wide?

Mr Keyes: That is right; is it regional or province-wide? At the moment, it is suggested under our new Bill 20 it will be coterminous boards.

Mr Ritch: We think it should be regional. We do not support the proposal in the Macdonald commission that recommends province-wide pooling. We believe in local control of the commercial and industrial assessment base.

Mr Keyes: But if you believe in your objective of equality of educational opportunity in every municipality, does that not also suggest there would be equal contributions by the contributing partners to it? In other words, the commercial-industrial assessment of Metropolitan Toronto may very well have to help support providing a more equitable form of education in northern Ontario.

Mr Ritch: We think the redistribution of income should be done through the income tax system, not through moving around commercial and industrial tax assessments.

Mr Keyes: I do not want to belabour it, but if you go to northern Ontario, you have much lower incomes, so there would be very little commercial-industrial assessment paid there. Right now there are 95 per cent grants by the province to some of those boards, but you are suggesting that it not only be 100 per cent but that it have no access, as a province, to get the additional moneys from the commercial-industrial assessment of the wealthy areas.

Mr Ritch: Right. The redistribution should come from the income tax and through the direct provincial grants, which we say should pay for 60 per cent. In the case of a municipality—and I am sure there are many small ones in northern Ontario that have virtually no commercial or industrial assessment base—the difference should be made up through the income tax. The redistribution should take place through the income tax, not through the commercial-industrial assessment base.

Mr Keyes: I will not carry it on. I just feel that you have some worthy recommendations but do

not seem to balance them well in your philosophy. I am surprised at the amount of work you have done in the other; your philosophy just does not seem to jibe, in my mind.

Mr Ritch: I would have to disagree.

Mr Milbrandt: So do I.

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Mr Keyes: What about any other members on the other side? We have listened to so many presentations, and you are talking about a philosophy of equality of educational opportunity, and you want to talk about equity, meaning fairness in funding, and we also want to look at adequacy.

Mr Milbrandt: You have to remember, in the Metropolitan Toronto area, for example, we may have a large commercial and industrial base, but we also have a large number of people who make great demands on the social services that are not present in other communities, in addition to the educational system. Some of the demands are not for approved costs, so these have to be made up through a local levy. Many of your smaller communities would not face similar situations. In addition—well, I will just let it go at that. I do not want to get into a big discussion on differences in funding in that regard.

None the less, I think our position is a good position. We are recommending that the province support education to the 60 per cent level through grants, which is something it has not done for many, many years. It has continued to fall to the point where it is now at the low 40 per cent range. Areas like Metro Toronto pay 100 per cent of their education costs through property taxes and through commercial and industrial. There are additional levies against the commercial-industrial in the most recent budget. Talk about being consistent in philosophical approach. My goodness, you are creating quite a situation if that direction continues in the Metro area and any other large metropolitan areas across the province.

What we are recommending is, we think, a very consistent approach to turning that around. We are basing it on recommendations of a commission report that, at least from the point of view of income tax, spent a considerable amount of time developing how the income tax system could be used in a very equitable way to make up some of these inequities, as we feel they are.

Mr Ritch: For Mr Keyes's edification, he should be aware that there is also over \$200 million worth of assessment in the city of Toronto for which we get zero dollars in property

taxes but for which we provide a very wide range of services. This is a fact that is not widely known. Of all the provincial institutions in Toronto, hospitals, the whole gamut, with over \$200 million of assessment produced, there is not one cent in property taxes for the city of Toronto, yet we provide a whole array of services—garbage collection, etc—to these institutions. This is something that should not be forgotten about; it generally is.

Mr Keyes: Do not forget the transfer payments, which you seem to be overlooking.

Mr Ritch: No, no transfer payments. I am talking about institutions from which there are no grants in lieu of taxes, not one cent. I can show you the statistics. There is over \$200 million worth of tax assessment in the city of Toronto for which we get not one cent in taxes from provincial government grants in lieu of taxes. That is a fact; I can show you the figures. You should not forget about this.

Mr Milbrandt: This is why the commercial-industrial base is so important to metropolitan areas like Metropolitan Toronto.

Mr Ritch: It is not just the city of Toronto, because most of the hospitals and universities are centred in Metropolitan Toronto. This is a factor that people forget about. It is a very important factor. It costs us a lot of money to provide services for which we are getting no property taxes.

Mr Villeneuve: I have a little problem, as Ken has, with the equilibrium here of assessment-rich boards versus assessment-poor boards, but let's leave that and simply go at the 40 per cent, which you say would be funded via pooling and personal income tax. Is that what I read?

Mr Ritch: It is in fact 32 per cent in 1985 figures across the province.

Mr Villeneuve: But you are looking at government support of 60 per cent total cost?

Mr Ritch: If the government supported education directly for 60 per cent, you are down to 18 per cent, because 22 per cent is paid for through the commercial and industrial assessment, which we are maintaining. It ranges between a high of 32—now the direct government is down to 42, so it is actually 34. It ranges 34 down to 20.

Mr Villeneuve: On the individual or personal income basis, would you suggest the allocation or the direction of funds based on one's desired support of one of the two systems, of which you speak and, I gather, to some degree in a negative fashion?

Mr Ritch: No, our committee has taken no position on that question. We have no position on the issue of contingent pooling, which is going to take revenues from the commercial base that is financing public and give it to the separate. We do not see it as right, as citizens in the city of Toronto, to take a position on that issue.

We have taken a position on the province-wide pooling, because that definitely would detriment both the separate and public school systems in Toronto and take revenues from both public and separate systems in Toronto and distribute them across the province. We are clearly opposed to that, for obvious reasons. But in terms of—I believe it is contingent, is it not, the pooling the province is bringing into effect this year, where it takes money from the commercial board that is given to the public system now and gives it to the separate system?

All we demand, of course, is that money taken from the public board to give to the separate system be replaced. The Toronto Board of Education and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, indeed all the public school boards in the province, are very leery or very nervous about the fact that somewhere down the road those moneys will not be replaced. We would certainly demand that any money taken from the public board and given to the separate board be refunded to the public boards, but we have taken no position on it. The only point we are making is that we do raise a question about whether the funding will be there to finance both these education systems somewhere down the road if the economy slips into a recession. I think that is a very valid point we make.

Mr Villeneuve: I think you do. Finally, I just go back to the individual who pays on his income tax as opposed to his assessment. Would he, according to your recommendation, have some direction to where his funds would go? Would they go in a pool?

Mr Ritch: We are not questioning that. That would be based on—

Mr Milbrandt: Whatever mechanism there is now.

Mr Ritch: Right. We are not challenging that. That would not be affected by our proposal at all.

Mr Milbrandt: Whatever mechanism is present now would be the mechanism used to determine where the individual's moneys would be directed.

Mr Villeneuve: A public school supporter's income tax would go to that system and vice versa.

Mr Ritch: Correct.

Mr Milbrandt: Yes, whatever direction.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you. Just before you leave, Mr Brumer has asked to make a point of clarification on some of the items on your first page. Mr Brumer is from the finance branch of the Ministry of Education.

Mr Brumer: For the committee's information, the Ministry of Education does provide additional grants for the provision of language instruction, that is, English as a second language for new Canadians who take it as part of the regular day-school program. The amounts are listed in the back of the regulations on a per-pupil basis, and they do compute to approximately \$40,600 at the elementary level and \$47,800 at the secondary level for every teacher the board employs in the provision of that kind of service for those pupils.

So the more teachers they hire to provide the service, because of the need, because of more children, that is counted in as additional amounts of money that would accrue to the Metropolitan Toronto School Board. It is conceivable, however, that if the mill rate that is applied in Toronto, as in all other areas, generates more money than the sum total of all these grants, then they would not actually receive any dollars. That would also mean that there would be no additional burden on the board in providing these programs either.

Programs pertaining to deaf students, orthopaedically handicapped: Again, through the services in-lieu-of grant, the ministry provides additional grants on a per-teacher basis for every teacher the board employs to provide those programs, as additional. Similarly, for programs for illiterate adults through the ABE program, continuing education, there are again additional grants that are recognized as going to Toronto.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In real terms, what are they? In real terms does the assessment cover it or does the province actually send money?

Mr Brumer: In real terms it is conceivable that there might not be any money because the mill rate is generating far more. If the mill rate were generating less money, then there would be an additional grant to top up for the additional cost incurred by the board, therefore avoiding any additional burden to that board.

Mr MacGregor: I just have a question. How does this relate to the actual cost of providing these services? Do you have any numbers for that?

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Mr Brumer: The level of grants we use are based on a provincial average. If the board spends more than that, then part of that would end up falling as a burden on to the board.

Mr Milbrandt: I think that is our point. Our point is that in fact in the Metro Toronto area these costs are greater than what the grant structure allows, even if there were a real transfer of money; and as Mr Johnston pointed out, in many cases, or in most cases probably, there is no real transfer of money because of the way the mill rate structure is set up.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On the other hand, I think it has to be said that you would have to look at the over-ceiling expenditures in Toronto in a real cost analysis fashion. I do not know anybody who has actually done that.

Mr Milbrandt: That is another one of the points we tried to make.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think you are presently at least double the amount over ceiling that many boards with huge problems, say, with large native populations, are able to put forward. That inequity is something which has not really been properly analysed. We always say in Metro we have all these extra costs, yet we do not analyse whether they are equal to the downside for other areas. A little further analysis really needs to be done.

Mr Milbrandt: We recognize that other areas do face these costs as well.

Mr MacGregor: What I am hearing, basically, is that the cost is way out of balance to what we are receiving. It does not even come close to what the actual expenditure is to provide these services.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the Citizens for Property Tax Reform for your contribution to our committee today as we grapple with this very difficult issue.

Mr MacGregor: Thank you.

The Chairman: Our final presentation this morning will be from the Voice for Hearing Impaired Children, Ontario. Rosemary, welcome back to our committee. We have enjoyed hearing from you at our various stages as we travelled across the province and here at Queen's Park. We are glad to have you back. I apologize for the late start this morning, but we have had a lot of interesting presentations and we are running somewhat behind. If you would like to begin by identifying yourself for the purposes of

Hansard, then you may begin your presentation whenever you are ready.

VOICE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN, ONTARIO

Mrs Pryde: Thank you. What I would like to do before I identify myself and my colleague is ask that, when we come to questions, you would speak up a little louder, and Dianne, you as well. I have a hearing problem myself and sometimes have difficulty hearing the members. I certainly want to hear your questions.

Voice certainly appreciates the opportunity to come before you today. Even though it has resulted in a delay in your lunch hour, and ours as well, we do appreciate the fact that you are taking the time to consider all the elements of financial equity and inequity.

I am the executive director of the provincial organization Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. We are actually representing all the chapters here today. We are only going to be making one presentation to the select committee this time, rather than the two or three we made last year.

My colleague is Gary Scattergood. Gary is a parent of a young hearing-impaired boy, and he is going to tell you a little about his family's experiences with the school board. Gary is also a member of the Voice provincial board of directors and is on our executive committee. One point I forgot in the written identification of the two speakers is that Gary is the Voice representative on the special education advisory committee for York region.

You have been given our presentation, which includes a covering presentation plus two attachments. I would just like to make the point right now that this attachment, which is our newsletter, is for your reading pleasure. It does not have to be considered in light of this committee's proceedings. It is just something I thought you might be interested in reading.

We would like to focus our presentation on a piece of legislation that affects all hearing-impaired children in separate and public school boards in Ontario, and that is the provision for in-lieu-of funding under Bill 82, which allows school boards to apply for moneys in lieu of sending children to provincial schools. This particular piece of legislation is designed to serve that portion of the hearing-impaired population that would normally have been sent to provincial schools and is designed to serve them instead in local school board programs. The Ministry of Education estimates that the number we are

talking about is between 1,500 and 2,000 people.

Before going any further in my presentation, what I would like to do, for the benefit of any of you who have not been involved with us before, is tell you a little bit about Voice.

We are the largest parent support organization in North America and we exist for the purpose of providing support to families with hearing-impaired children. We believe very strongly in the provision of education for our children in local community schools. Bill 82 does provide many of the services needed to allow this to happen. Problems arise, however, when the school boards and the children do not fit the criteria for in-lieu-of funding or when the services needed for these children are not available within the mandate of in-lieu-of funding.

Our written presentation provides you with some details of specific problems related to in-lieu-of funding. What I would like to do is just highlight a few of those issues for you and talk about their impact on individual children across Ontario. Then I will turn the podium over to Gary, who will talk about his family's experiences with Bill 82 and give you some of our organization's recommendations for improving the financial situation and the services for our children.

In-lieu-of funding provides for a number of things, but it does not provide for itinerant teachers of the deaf or environmental adjustments to a particular school or room within the school or for transportation from one school board to another.

Itinerant teachers are certified teachers of the deaf who provide one-to-one tutoring and communication therapy to children who are in integrated programs in the school boards. Therefore, they are primarily involved in regular classrooms, but they still require some one-to-one assistance, particularly in language development, and some tutoring, specifically in those subjects, such as English and history, where a comprehension of language is a very important component of learning in the classroom.

Itinerant teachers presently are paid for out of a special education budget, and if the particular school board's budget for special education requirements is limited or if the itinerant teacher position is not regarded as a priority, then this service may or may not be available.

The environmental adjustments are sometimes very simple things like drapes and carpeting and appropriate lighting in order to create an acoustically correct classroom. But they too have to

come out of schools' regular budgets. The example we used in our submission I think is a particularly heart-rending one and I actually observed this little five-year-old myself.

A little five-year-old with a profound hearing loss in a self-contained kindergarten class has biweekly individual tutoring sessions with his teacher. The only thing separating the child and his teacher during these sessions from the rest of the five-year-olds, who are very noisy, is a baffle. There is no provision at all in the school budget for any kind of private tutoring room. So the child gets very little out of these one-to-one sessions, which are supposed to help him develop his language.

Transportation becomes a problem when a particular school board, particularly a small school board, does not offer the kind of services and programs that are needed for the children in its jurisdiction. We have a case of a young six-year-old in the southern part of the province who is being transported from one county to another in order to take part in a self-contained program.

The problem arose when the school board let her parents know that they could only afford to pay for four days of transportation costs and gave the parents two choices: Either keep the child out of school one day a week or pay for the fifth day themselves. The child travels by taxi for about 45 minutes from one county to another. Transportation costs are part of special education. They are not a luxury, but a regular part of that particular programming, and this school board cannot apparently afford to pay the full cost.

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In-lieu-of funding is not available unless each school board meets specific criteria. It is not available if the child's loss is conductive rather than sensory-neural. Just for the benefit of those of you who may not be familiar with this, a conductive loss is a loss in the middle ear; a sensory-neural loss is a loss in the inner ear.

A conductive loss can often be corrected by surgery, but the age of the child and the general health of the child will govern when the surgery will take place and indeed even if the surgery will take place. In the meantime, the child has a hearing loss just the same as a child with a sensory-neural loss, but that child is not eligible for special services under in-lieu-of funding.

In-lieu-of funding is not available if the child's loss is less than 70 decibels, which is a particular medical level that is determined through audiograms. It is an artificial determination of need. There is a little boy up in the northern part of the

province who has a mild to moderate hearing loss but he does have a lot of difficulty understanding what is being said in class. He is seven years old and he is active to begin with. Because he is having difficulty hearing, he loses the gist of the conversation, his attention span is very short and he gets very frustrated, and so does the teacher. He needs a self-contained class, but he is not eligible because his hearing loss is less than the 70 decibels.

In-lieu-of funding is not available if the school board has fewer than four pupils with a hearing loss greater than 70 decibels. While this is not a problem in the larger metropolitan areas, it does become a problem in the smaller communities, and we have outlined an example of just such a problem for you in the written presentation.

In-lieu-of funding is only available if the students are enrolled in a self-contained class for at least 50 per cent of their schoolday. That is fine for students who require a lot of self-contained assistance, but once the child starts to develop some language, he is ready to move on into more integrated settings and have a broader educational experience. But once they move on, they are no longer eligible and their school board is no longer eligible for the funding services available under in-lieu-of funding.

The irony in all of this is that everything would be paid for the children I have told you about, and other children indeed, if they were enrolled in provincial schools. The fact that they are in regular schools throughout the province means that some of them get service and some of them do not.

I would like to turn things over to Gary now. He is going to be giving you another real-life example of life under Bill 82. He is also going to outline some of the recommendations that we have for improving the situation for our children and to talk a little more specifically about a particular concern that has arisen just this year under special education grants.

Mr Scattergood: I am better known as Ben's father and not by my own first name.

To talk a little bit about my son, Ben, he is a profoundly hearing-impaired child. His mother had rubella early in pregnancy. We did not even know until Ben was 18 months of age that he was profoundly hearing-impaired. It is a sensory-neural loss and it cannot be corrected by surgery.

He wears two hearing aids and has gone to Louise Crawford at the Hospital for Sick Children and learned through what is called the auditory training method. That means there is no sign language, there is no manual, there is no

visual component to this at all, except that we all read lips and he does it very well. He has never had a formal lesson. His mother gave up her career and trained him at home so that he could be a contributing member of our society and so that he could attend our local public school, which he has done from kindergarten and even before that in the local nursery school.

I think if my years on the special education advisory committee have helped me at all, it has been to create a contradiction in my mind that there certainly are programs and funding required for special education, and I will get to that in a moment. But in our particular case, maybe because we are highly visible in our school board or maybe because we are vocal parents, I am not certain, Ben may have, and I stress "may have," received too much help of the wrong kind.

When we urge you to review the criteria for the in-lieu-of grant mechanism, I would like you to consider our deaf population. To me, in lieu of simply means in lieu of a provincial school program and that that program would be provided at the local level so that your child can live at home. Certainly, being able to live at home and in his local community has made Ben a happier child.

But I think that our population of children—and there are many of them in Ontario trained in the auditory-verbal approach—require a modification of the criteria, in particular, the 70-decibels restriction and, more important, 50 per cent of their time being spent with a teacher. That should be modified downward to allow more time for my child in a regular classroom, but still receiving the support he requires.

Another one is that the itinerant teacher of the hearing-impaired should not be funded through in-lieu-of grants, but rather through the regular special education grant. As you have heard from many other presenters, I am certain, the fact that the special-ed grant and for that matter the trainable retarded grant are folded into the general legislative grant, as parents—and I mean as parents with the special education advisory committee, not just of hearing-impaired kids—we feel that the accountability for special ed programs and the funding that supports them will disappear. Our biggest concern in that regard is that there should be special-ed direct funding and not have it folded into the GLG so that SEACs can track to ensure that special-ed money is being spent on special-ed programs; not just the SEACs, of course, but the ministry itself.

An example, I would think, is if we could have itinerant teachers of the hearing-impaired paid

for under expanded or modified criteria for in-lieu-of grant funding. Our association has paid for an itinerant teacher of the hearing-impaired to travel throughout the northern Ontario region from Ottawa, all up through Timmins, Kapuskasing, over as far as London and, I believe, Sarnia.

For the last four or five years, our funding has been in jeopardy. The program therefore is in jeopardy right now. But what we have here is an itinerant teacher of the hearing-impaired, funded entirely by our volunteer charity association, doing the job that an itinerant teacher should be doing inside a school board in northern Ontario. A simple solution, in my mind, and maybe it is overly simple, would be to have a board of education hire her and to have other boards purchase service.

At present, what we are seeing is a school board that does not have a large hearing-impaired population or does not have a lot of facility saying, "I can get in-lieu-of grant funding and I can hire a teacher, and that program may not be appropriate for that child because he has to spend 50 per cent of his time with that teacher," or whatever. Or that child is sent to a provincial school—not under in-lieu-of grants but directly to the school—and the child is no longer living in his home community. I think a modification of the criteria would help resolve that problem.

Our recommendations, as listed, are:

1. Remove the 70-dB restriction and base it more on the child's level of functioning ability.

My son is profoundly hearing-impaired. That is the worst category, but if he were in this room, you could all have a conversation with him in the language of the society that he lives in. His loss exceeds 95 dB in his better ear. He does not learn language easily. Some profoundly hearing-impaired kids do and they speak even better than he does.

2. Remove the requirement for four children in a contained class.

Again if we had itinerant teachers funded under in-lieu-of grants, we could have half a teacher here and half a day there and two kids in a program and whatever is appropriate for that school board and, more important, for that child.

3. Remove the criterion of 50 per cent self-contained.

I think I have beaten that one to death.

1240

4. Establish minimum guidelines for environmental surroundings.

It is imperative that a hearing-impaired child be able to actually hear the teacher, especially if

it is a one-on-one situation where we are paying extra freight for that teacher through special-ed programming and special-ed funding. Let's make sure that the child can hear the teacher.

5. Provide funds for all services for hearing-impaired students, itinerant teachers, transportation, etc.

We are asking for the moon, I know. I have been around the special education advisory committee long enough to realize that there is not all the money in the world, but we are stressing a few modifications, please.

Just to touch on some of the other things, we would like to mention again the funding mechanism, the general legislative grant, all the grants being rolled in together. Simply stated, we would like to be able to follow the tracking of special-ed money for special ed programs.

In the attachment that we have given, the numbers may not be completely correct. They are accurate as far as I know, being a member of SEAC from my board. That is to say, the ever-increasing burden on the local taxpayer is going to become substantially untenable. You will not be able to carry it.

As an example, my board has given me these figures. The board used to receive about \$4,760 per trainable retarded student, which amounted to 100 per cent funding or about \$750,000 a year. The board now receives \$23 per pupil enrolled in the system, which amounts to \$1.3 million, but under the mechanism for granting, our schools are actually receiving about half of what they received before and the local taxpayer is expected to pick up the balance. I think the minister should go back to the 60 per cent number that we heard previous presenters recommend.

Also, we are concerned about the commercial-industrial assessment. It seems to me that, at least in my region, there is an imbalance in that the separate schools are getting more capital funding in order to catch up. The promotion of the funding of both boards mentioned that there was to be no impact on the public school boards, but I do not think it is working out that way.

In a growth board like York region, the money available makes it difficult to maintain the status quo, let alone build new schools. There is a high school in Newmarket that consists of portables in the football field of a high school that already exists there.

I think, in the interests of time, we will just go right to the summary. The then Minister of Education in a statement to the Legislative Assembly said:

"It is the conviction of the ministry that the interests, needs and strengths of each pupil, as identified through the co-operative and cumulative efforts of parents, educators, support staff and other professional disciplines, must determine the placement of individual exceptional pupils."

We respectfully submit these recommendations to you and entertain your questions.

The Chairman: Thank you, Gary and Rosemary, for your very full, informative and valuable presentation. When you were talking about the tracking of special education grants, Mr Brumer from the ministry indicated that he had some information in this regard. Could he make a comment on this?

Mr Brumer: Pertaining to the services in lieu of grants, those moneys are supplementary grants that were added to the special education funding for those boards that potentially had children who could or would be accepted in a provincial school and the board chose to provide the program locally. The intent was to remove the financial factor from the issue of whether the board would send the child to a provincial school or undertake a program locally.

If that money had not been put in place, if that program had not been put in place, it was felt that the board might consider that it would be more desirable to recommend that that child be served in a provincial school rather than by the board and the board have to pick up all these additional extra costs for that child.

The criteria for services in lieu of funding is based on a submission made by the board to a committee. The committee reviews each case on an individual basis. The criteria are that the child be admissible to a provincial school; that the teacher of that child be qualified to teach in that provincial school; that the program be comparable to a program in a provincial school; that adequate physical resources, in terms of the room, be provided; adequate support equipment be provided, in terms of audio equipment and also in terms of staff services. Those are five criteria that are taken into account in providing the program.

It is intended, as I stipulated, for those children that the board, in effect, has a choice of saying, "We recommend that the child go to a provincial school," rather than serving that child locally.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I understand what is underlying this is that a child who would not require more than 50 per cent self-contained would not be eligible for a provincial school. Is that one of the presumptions?

Mr Brumer: The presumption is that if the board feels that child has a disability that would best be served in the environment of a provincial school, and the board chooses to undertake to provide that program itself rather than referring that child to the provincial school, then the supplementary grant is provided to that board.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just trying to understand it. If it went before a committee and the board came forward and basically made the argument that it had a certain child who had a 70-dB level and it was having trouble getting an itinerant teacher, etc, would the committee basically say, "That is a kid who should be dealt with under special ed anyway and does not need to be put into an institution"? I guess I am trying to see if the concerns here, or flexibility that has been requested, are in fact the very definitions that would be used for a child being eligible to go into a provincial school.

Mr Brumer: That is correct. The intent is that if the child required such an intensive program, that would be provided in a provincial school; which is really full time, 24 hours a day, in effect, if it happened to be on a residential basis. What the committee has actually done is it has backed off a full-time program and said, "We will settle for 50 per cent, but we will not go below that."

Mr R. F. Johnston: Could I hear a response from either Ben's dad or Rosemary on that?

Mr Scattergood: I would like to jump in on that and let the committee know that I am fully aware of everything that we just heard. I want to make this point as a parent and as a director of Voice for Hearing Impaired Children: You are talking about a population that we do not represent. If you look at the enrolment in your provincial schools, you will see that it is declining to the point where the Robarts School is no longer simply a school for the deaf. They have gone looking for other exceptional children to be able to help and other ways to use the building.

You can tell I am a little biased about this situation and the methodology we use to teach our kids, but I am a parent. I am a parent of a kid and it was not my choice to be that parent. I am just doing the best job I can for my son and for every other hearing-impaired kid in the province, and hopefully in the country, who has the same opportunity.

Here in the city of Toronto we have a lady who can walk on water named Louise Crawford at the Hospital for Sick Children, who for 27 years has taught over 225 profoundly hearing-impaired children how to use the language of our society.

These kids have their BAs, they are social workers, they are senior executives with company cars and work for the American banks—I mean, I could list names of these kids—and why? Because they did not go to a provincial school; because they went to their home school and learned the language of the society they live in.

Our association started a program similar to that at North York General Hospital almost 10 years ago. For eight years we paid for the auditory-verbal teacher, who was a certified teacher in the public system when we hired him and had his special-ed papers, and still does, except he is no longer funded by the Ministry of Education. As of 10 years ago, our association raised the money to pay him for eight years, and only last year, by threatening to remove that program—now up to two teachers—from North York General Hospital, did we manage to get the governors of the hospital to get the Ministry of Health to pay him.

1250

What I am trying to say is that we have a deaf education review under way in this province as well, and I think you should consider not what has been done but what can be done for this population of kids. We are given information by the Ministry of Education that it costs as much to keep my son in his home school as it would to send him to the provincial school. Even if that were the case—and I do not believe it is; I think it is more expensive to send him to a provincial school—would it not be better to have my child living at home as a happy child living in his home community, learning to be a regular contributing member of the society that he lives in?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want some clarification on one point. You focused in on the in-lieu-of grants for this kind of funding. We are hearing from the ministry that in point of fact the definition of that in-lieu-of grant is the kind of person who might otherwise be going to one of the institutions and that there seem to be pretty strict notions of what that person's profile is. The response from the ministry—if I am putting words in your mouth, jump in and pluck them away from me—is that the special-ed funding should be meeting the costs that are involved in this. Is that basically the argument that has come from the ministry? Can you respond to that presumption, Rosemary?

Mrs Pryde: I have two comments to make. First of all, because the special-ed funding has now been rolled into the general legislative grant and because school boards are continually facing very difficult decisions about priorities, and

because communication is the sustenance of life, it is the basic need for children, in order to learn, to be able to understand, so in our view there is no prioritizing at all; it is number one. But because there is no longer any requirement outside perhaps a moral requirement on the part of the board to say, "Yes, we are spending money that was in special education on special education issues," a board might have a more pressing need.

Our children's educational requirements are in jeopardy, and that is just not good enough. We have children who require FM systems, we have children who may require some self-contained classes and we have lots of children who require itinerant teachers. There are not enough itinerant teachers around the province. Itinerant teachers are expensive, there is no question about that; so are teachers of the deaf in the provincial schools. The itinerant teachers can teach in a provincial school, by the way, so they qualify, at least under that particular criteria, for in-lieu-of funding.

If a school board has to make some decisions, our kids may be left out, and it is dangerous to leave them out, because if you leave out the services that they require, the services that are essential for them to learn, they are not going to learn.

I can use myself as an example. There were no special education grants, there were no special services at all when I was going through school. I have an 80-decibel loss, so I would normally have gone to a provincial school, but my parents wanted me to be educated locally. It was quite a struggle, and it is still a struggle for many children, particularly in the smaller school boards.

I guess I would like to make a point about the criteria for in-lieu-of funding as it is related to the needs of our children. One criterion is that there must be four children in the school board. That information was given to us earlier this year, actually, through ministry officials.

There is a school board in northern Ontario that has two preschoolers who are now enrolled in their local community school. They have profound losses, but because there are only two of them, the ministry was refusing to provide funds under in-lieu-of funding, so the school board had to do some juggling around in order to provide services for these kids. While I can appreciate the intent—and we certainly, at the beginning of our presentation, indicated our appreciation for the establishment of in-lieu-of funding because that meant that many children were able to receive services in their local

schools rather than go to provincial schools—as with any piece of legislation, when it comes to implementation there are going to be problems. There will always be problems, there will always be exceptions, and we want to bring those problems and exceptions to you.

Mr Scattergood: As a long-time member of the special-ed advisory committee in York region, I see some of the gains we have made since the implementation of Bill 82 disappearing, and it is the folding in of the grants which created that. What we are saying now to you is that the in-lieu-of grant mechanism is being misused anyway and what we would like to do is to see a modification of the criteria so that it can be used appropriately.

What is happening—I mentioned it before and I want to stress it again—is that the boards that cannot afford an itinerant teacher for a population of hearing-impaired kids who should be in their local community and in their local school are accepting in-lieu-of grant funding or buying the same kind of service from the next school board. It is not appropriate for our population, and our population of deaf kids is growing: more and more kids are achieving through the auditory-verbal approach than ever before.

The Chairman: I think what we will do is ask Mr Brumer if he can check that four-pupils-per-board provision, because he seems uncertain whether that actually is ministry policy, and see whether you actually got the right information.

Mr Scattergood: It is my understanding that there is a minimum of four and a maximum of eight per teacher in the in-lieu-of program.

Mr Brumer: I would require additional information because I do sit on the committee that does the reviews for services in lieu, and these are handled as individual cases, each one. There are no preset conditions other than the ones I outlined previously. If the board meets those, we will look at the case.

The Chairman: Perhaps you could provide that to Leon at the end of the session.

Mr Scattergood: Did I hear you say that four is not a minimum number?

Mr Brumer: There is no preset condition other than the five that I outlined previously.

Mrs Pryde: I think it is going to be important for the particular school board in northern Ontario to be aware of that, because the response it got from the Ministry of Education was no.

Mr Brumer: The only other thing I would add to whoever is dealing with that is that I know educators—and I am not involved in that field—may take the view that a single child alone in an environment like that is not good pedagogy.

The Chairman: Perhaps you can discuss this afterwards and get those details.

Thank you very much for your presentation today. I had a question, but in view of the time I will ask you immediately following the proceedings. The select committee stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 1258.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1409 in committee room 1.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to convene the select committee on education as we continue to look at the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, particularly relating to the equity, adequacy and accountability of both operating and capital financing.

For our first presentation today we are pleased to have a joint presentation from the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Welcome to our committee. We are glad you were able to travel and visit with us at Queen's Park. We are looking forward to hearing your viewpoint. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time, and we hope at least part of that can be reserved for questions from the members.

Would you begin by introducing each of yourselves individually for the purposes of Hansard. As well, I understand you have some members in the audience who are also participating. Begin whenever you wish.

LINCOLN COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC
SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

WELLAND COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC
SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Reich: I am Larry Reich, superintendent of business and finance for the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Mrs Atherton: I am Arlene Atherton, chairperson of the Welland separate board's cost committee. I would like to introduce our vice-chairperson, Joe Noonan, representing the chair of the Welland board, who is Mike Parent.

Mrs Venditti: I am Susan Venditti. I am a trustee with the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and co-chairman of the joint cost committee. With me today we have Joe Huibers, chairman of our board, and Bob O'Neill, our director of education.

Mr Wojtowicz: My name is Ed Wojtowicz. I am superintendent of business for the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Mrs Atherton: Madam Chairman, just remind me if I start rambling too fast. Tell me to slow down.

We, the Welland and Lincoln separate school boards, appreciate this opportunity to present our support of announced government initiatives to you, the select committee on education. These initiatives have been long in coming but are certainly welcome to both of our boards.

This brief is premised on the fact that equal and adequate educational opportunity for all students is dependent upon equal and adequate access to the financial resources for all boards, and it is also based on the concept of stewardship and accountability. Both Lincoln and Welland separate boards are proud of the quality education we have been able to provide our students, even with unequal and inadequate financial resources. We strongly urge you to ensure that the proposed legislation is enacted and becomes effective on 1 January 1990.

Our first three recommendations are interconnected. Rather than read the brief in its entirety, we would like to read each recommendation and then highlight the points of each of these recommendations.

The first recommendation is that the select committee support the initiatives taken by the government to introduce greater equity into educational finance with the plan to redistribute commercial assessment.

The Macdonald commission report of 1985 pointed out that the root cause of the present inadequacy in educational finance is the uneven distribution of commercial assessment wealth. Assessment in Ontario is concentrated in a few places and, as a result, a few school boards are assessment-rich while the large majority of boards are assessment-poor. Typically, separate school boards are assessment-poor boards. They educate 30 per cent of the students while they receive less than 10 per cent of the assessment. This is the reality facing Lincoln and Welland separate boards today.

Lincoln separate educates 25 per cent of the students in its jurisdiction, yet it receives only six per cent of the commercial assessment. Welland separate educates 32 per cent of the students in its jurisdiction, yet it receives only 14 per cent of the commercial assessment.

The second recommendation I would like to speak to is that the select committee support the initiatives taken by the government to introduce greater equity into educational finance with the plan to increase expenditure ceilings.

The general legislative grants regulation is based on two funding principles, the first one being the equality of educational opportunity. All school boards must have equitable financial resources to provide a base level of education programs and services. The second is the local tax equity. All school boards must make the same tax effort to raise the local share of the cost of providing the base level of education programs and services.

These two principles would work very well if boards were able to stay within the expenditure ceilings, but the fact is that 95 per cent of boards have exceeded the expenditure ceiling, and therein lies the rub for assessment-poor boards, because overceiling expenditures are funded strictly from local taxation. This means that the assessment-poor boards, which most separate school boards are, cannot afford the larger overceiling expenditures because of the very low commercial assessment base.

This creates extreme inequities in the current funding of education in Ontario. An example of this inequity at the elementary level in the 1988 operating costs is the disparity in expenditure per pupil between the Kent County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, with a low of \$2,900 per pupil, and a high of \$4,818 per pupil for the Metro board of education.

The third recommendation is that the select committee advise the province to establish a formula to ensure adequate funding by increasing the per-pupil grant ceilings to more realistic levels with additional general legislative grants.

The Macdonald commission again recognized the inadequacy of the grant ceilings and recommended that, "Provincial grant ceilings should be maintained at a realistic level, at least to keep pace with the annual increase in the cost of goods and services."

The increase in expenditure ceilings by the average rate of inflation is not adequate for the following reasons. First, the cost of goods and services vary from region to region in Ontario. Second, the salary costs, which represent 80 per cent of the expenditures, have usually been substantially higher than the average inflation rate. Third, the new costs incurred to implement government initiatives such as the pay equity legislation, WHMIS or the workplace hazardous materials information system legislation, and others, are not covered by inflation rates. The fourth and final point on that is that the annual increase in expenditure ceilings is often accompanied by a related increase in the provincial base

mill rate, which effectively shifts the increase in the ceilings to the local share.

I would now ask that Susan continue with recommendation 4 onward.

1420

Mrs Venditti: Our fourth recommendation is that the select committee recommend that any new programs mandated by the government be supported by additional grants which would be allocated to all school boards at the boards' rate of grants.

The Lincoln and Welland county Roman Catholic separate school boards are very conscious of our responsibilities of stewardship and accountability. We try to balance the expectations of parents with the expectations of the government of Ontario. This balance is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain when the government funds its special initiatives directly. Examples are the primary enrolment improvement plan, support for intermediate science materials and the purchase of learning materials.

Funding directly leaves little room for local decision-making. We stand accountable for provincial initiatives, even though in some cases we would have chosen other ways of improving programming. We welcome any extra money, but we know that the 100 per cent funding of provincial initiatives fails to take into account the local board's wealth or poverty and that this money could be more equitably spent if it were distributed to the boards at the boards' rate of grants.

Our fifth recommendation is that the select committee encourage the government to make additional grants to all boards for tuition fees payable for all open-access students, including those affected by high cost factors.

Our coterminous public school boards spend more to educate a secondary school student than we do. We pay this higher cost for open-access pupils attending public secondary schools. This is an expenditure over which we have little control, because we do not determine the program costs of our coterminous boards.

We congratulate the government for taking the initiative in the 1989 general legislative grants to make a larger portion of the open-access tuition fees grantable. This is providing us with some relief.

Tuition fees based on high cost factors related to technical education and special education receive no grant recognition from the provinces. This portion of the tuition fee is entirely the responsibility of the local board. Presently, the

Lincoln separate board pays \$192,272 and the Welland separate board pays \$654,018 directly out of local revenue for the high-cost-factor tuitions for open-access pupils. This is an escalating financial burden over which we have little control.

Our sixth recommendation is that the select committee urge the government to provide additional capital funding for renovation of facilities necessary because of age, heavy use and inadequacy. The government is to be commended for its initiative in advancing capital funds upon the approval of projects and for guaranteeing for three years the amount of funds to be used for capital allocations.

This will help our board fund and plan our capital projects. Most of the capital has been used in the creation of new pupil spaces. We truly applaud the efforts of the government to meet these needs; however, more capital is needed for additions and renovations. Some of our schools are old, inadequate and overused. Imagine the deterioration of a 25-year-old facility that has been used at 250 per cent capacity for 15 years. Its chronological age is no measure of its real age.

These facilities are deteriorating at an alarming rate. This deterioration is exacerbated even further by the fact that many of our preventive maintenance budgets have been slashed in order to meet other budget priorities and in order to balance our budget. More capital money spent in this area could save the province's inventory of school buildings.

Our seventh recommendation is that the select committee recommend to the government that steps be taken to improve the cash flow of grants to school boards. Once again, we congratulate the ministry for the recent efforts to improve the cash flow of our operating grants. More needs to be done. We spend 25 per cent of our budget in the first three months, but only receive 17 per cent of the grants payable to us. We borrow money to cover this shortfall. The interest we pay on these loans adds to our operational costs. Assessment-poor boards do not have the cash reserves necessary to reduce these borrowing costs and are faced with interest payments we can ill afford. We suggest that cash advances on grants payable should take place immediately in the new fiscal year and that annual grants should be paid in 12 equal instalments.

The trustees of our board are conscious of the responsibility of stewardship and accountability which we assumed upon election as trustees. However, we maintain that proper accountability

can only exist when all school boards have access to equal and adequate financial resources to meet the demands and expectations of the public and the government. At this time such conditions do not exist in Ontario.

We are confident that the implementation of the recommendations will certainly help to improve the system of educational finance by eliminating the more evident inequities and by providing adequate funding in the more critical areas.

In conclusion, we are grateful to the select committee for giving our boards the opportunity to express our support to the government for the initiatives taken in the areas of reform of educational finance and for allowing us to make recommendations for additional reforms.

The Chairman: Thank you for a very well-documented and well-stated brief. I am also very glad you have left time for members' questions.

Mrs O'Neill: You have a very good brief here; it is very specific. And I commend you for coming together; I think that does strengthen your case.

I would like to go to the open access question, if I may, on page 19. I would like to know if you could tell me how many students are in open access, generally speaking, and then those in special education and technological programs. Have you got those numbers?

Mr Reich: If you turn to page 20, you will find two charts which indicate the number of pupils for both the Lincoln separate board, and on page 21 for the Welland separate board for the years 1986 right through to 1989. You will find them in column 2. In Lincoln, for example, we had 258 pupils in 1987, 569 in 1988 and 649 in 1989. In Welland, we had 776 pupils in 1987, up to 1,297 for 1988, and a total of 1,390 for 1989.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sorry I missed that. Are the numbers increasing because grandfathering is being phased out? Is that one of the reasons?

Mr Reich: It is part of that mechanism, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Is it also that you are not providing or that you have made the decision to buy, particularly, the high-cost programs? Could you tell me what the high-cost programs are that you are buying?

Mr Reich: Yes, there are a number of programs which include technological studies and vocational studies.

Mrs O'Neill: You are doing none of that yourself?

Mr Reich: We are starting to do some of that, but we advise you that our board is finding it very difficult to fund these programs under the circumstances, especially as they relate to the lack of commercial assessment.

Mrs O'Neill: And you have no facilities?

Mr Reich: We have no facilities.

Mrs O'Neill: What about special ed? What are you buying there?

Mr Reich: We have some special ed programs, as dictated by the needs of the students, which go through the IPRC process. Again, those costs are extremely costly and we are easing into them as we can afford them.

1430

Mrs O'Neill: I will leave it for other questioners, Madam Chairman. I would just like to know what your enrolment is in Lincoln and Welland, in total.

Mr Reich: I will defer that question on Lincoln. Welland county's total for 1989 is approximately 12,900 pupils.

Mrs O'Neill: So you have 10 per cent that you are buying for?

Mr Reich: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: That is very high. What is the amount for Lincoln?

Mrs Venditti: We have approximately 9,053.

Mr Jackson: I will try to make it a brief question. It has three parts. I would like to get a reaction to the education lot levy proposal. The second part of the question will be the impact to your board of the adjustment from 75 per cent to 60 per cent. I recognize your point 6 with respect to additional funds for renovations, which we have heard extensively, but my third part of the question is: To what extent are both of your boards accelerating your debentured approach to capital facilities and what percentage of your budget is debt service? Is that waxing, waning, growing? What plans are you making now in terms of debenturing capital projects? I am sorry to throw it at you that way, but we really have a very short time here.

Mr Wojtowicz: At present, in our area, our half of the county of Lincoln, there has not been a great deal of discussion or actually debate on the use of tax levies on lots, for instance, and subsidies on lots. In the city, which is the biggest community in our area, there has not been any discussion on a public level or at the regional government.

Traditionally, both boards borrow through the use of debentures. I think we have probably had

the same rate of return on our capital; in other words, that portion that the ministry pays. Ours in Lincoln is 83.91 per cent for secondary, and that is where our growth is. That is based on 75 per cent. There is no question that if it gets down to 60 per cent, that 83 per cent will drop just as fast.

We have large capital needs. For instance, in one high school we have a \$5.7-million allocation which we are now in the stage of getting tenders on. We have approval to buy a \$5-million site and \$10 million for a second high school in 1991-92. We have approximately 2,750 students, and at present we have less than half of those in permanent spaces. So we are going to be in the market on debentures.

I do not know if there is significant growth in our part of Ontario that is going to generate enough money for the needs we have in the short term, and certainly those of our coterminous board, the Lincoln County Board of Education.

Technically, I guess we always resist when the ministry starts to drop its rate. It just pays an average of 75 per cent. We have always been below the average board in wealth, so our share has always been higher than 75 per cent. I guess traditionally we have more faith in that rate than we do in an alternative form of funding.

Mrs Venditti: I think, too, as far as lot levies are concerned, it is a really interesting concept, but philosophically it does change the emphasis of the funding of education from the responsibility of the whole community to the responsibility of the new-home builder.

Mrs Atherton: Larry would like to speak briefly on that.

Mr Reich: As the question relates to the Welland County separate school board, and in the first part which relates to the lot levy legislation, we do commend the government for initiating that legislation. We see it as much more applicable to boards which are very high growth, in that they will take full advantage of the legislation. In the case of Welland county, the growth is of some extent but not of very large extent, so as a result we would not see that legislation affecting us in a very positive way.

As for the plan to reduce the funding from 75 per cent to some 60 per cent for capital funds, we see that as a negative move. We would prefer, and we urge the government, to defer that plan and possibly to look at a higher rate of grant for capital funding than presently proposed.

As far as the third part of the question is concerned, which had to do with the percentage of debentures as it relates to the total budget of

our board, as a result of expansion in secondary schools, which is a reality for our board, having gone from two secondary schools to six within this year, a great need will surface with respect to the debt servicing of debentures. Schools have to be renovated and expanded. We are looking at going from a very low percentage, of less than one per cent, to a total in excess of two per cent in the next year or two.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the separate school boards from Lincoln and from Welland for their presentation to our committee today. It has been very helpful. We are glad to have an insight into what people in those areas feel about how the education financing in this province should go.

I have here a note from the government caucus members saying they were pleased to welcome Mr Johnston to their side. Oh, he has left again.

Our next presentation today will be the Waterloo County Board of Education. Welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have the perspective of the Waterloo County Board of Education today. If you would like to begin your presentation by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard? We have allocated 30 minutes total time, which we hope will include some time for members' questions in the latter part. As I say, please begin by identifying yourselves, and then begin your brief whenever you are ready.

WATERLOO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Ward: Ray Ward, director of education for the board.

Ms Sanderson: Susan Sanderson, trustee with the board and vice-chairperson.

Mrs Witmer: Elizabeth Witmer. I am chairperson of the board. I would like to introduce two people in the audience. With us as well are trustee Walter Gowing and also our superintendent of financial services and assistant treasurer, Gary Schlueter.

Mr Ewasko: Al Ewasko, superintendent of business and treasurer.

Mrs Witmer: We welcome this opportunity to provide a few comments on education financing. I would like you to know that these comments are submitted with the intent of identifying for you those issues which our board feels need to be addressed rather than seeking to propose definitive solutions to you. You will see that our submission takes a broad perspective of the

financing issues under the general headings of equity, accountability and adequacy.

We have provided you with a little information on the background of our board. Again, I would just mention that we are the sixth largest public school board in Ontario. We have 52,000 students and we are growing. We are going to be building four new schools over the next three years. We presently have 270 portables, and once we implement the new initiatives we will have well over 400, the new initiatives being primary class size reduction and junior kindergarten.

Now to our basic position. We do view education as an essential investment in, rather than as a cost to, our society. We notice that our view coincides with an observation contained in Mr Radwanski's report, Background Notes on the Service Sector in Ontario. I quote from him: "In the previous industrial economy, the most important inputs were capital and raw materials; in the emerging new economy, the most important inputs are people and knowledge."

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We suggest, therefore, that it may be inappropriate to rely on a financial and funding system that was designed some two decades ago and which was based upon the social, political and economic concepts prevailing at that time if we are going to provide an educational system that is required for the 1990s and beyond.

I would like to take a look at equity, the principles. When you look at the issue of equity, it has two dimensions or two faces: first, the provision of sufficient resources to ensure equality of educational opportunity; second, the financing of those resources on an equitable basis.

We believe that education provided by public school boards has a universal societal benefit. It is open or it is accessible to all learners. As a result, we feel that financing should be as broadly based as possible. Again, although schooling provides benefits to the learner, we want to emphasize that it has been demonstrated that society receives the benefit from a better educated learner.

If we take a look at equity, the tax system, I will focus on some major points. If we are going to redesign in any way the present tax system, the ability to pay should be a major criterion in determining the local share. This means that the greater portion of the total funds should be provided from the province's general revenues. We need to recognize that the provision of education is a partnership between the province

and local communities, and to protect local autonomy a local contribution to the total cost should continue to be required.

We looked at different ways of taxing, and although we studied them, we soon determined that although a tax on property has some undesirable features, the general stability and growth of assessment as opposed to other tax bases, which may be subject to the health and the cyclical nature of the local economy, suggests to us that the tax on property needs to be retained.

We also feel—and this is certainly key—that the province needs to provide stability in the funding of its share. This can best be done by providing a commitment to honour its share over a stated period of time. So we feel that certainly better long-range planning is necessary.

If we turn now to accountability, how to achieve it? Accountability for education costs can best be achieved if the two partners, the province and the local school boards, agree upon publicly stated goals and objectives. However, accountability also requires a monitoring of how well these goals and objectives are being met.

We feel local autonomy is especially important. The local boards represent the community. We need to continue to have input from parents and students in establishing objectives. We need to listen to business enterprises in our community, because we know they have a substantial stake in the output of the educational system as well as providing a significant share of the funding. So their current needs and the forecast of future needs must be considered if the educational enterprise expects to be accountable to all its public.

Again, we believe that accountability at the local level in the future must be accompanied by the responsibility and the authority to make decisions respecting both programs and the delivery of those programs. In addition, provincial goals defining the expectations for education must be established in concert with—and I stress “in concert with”—all the parties concerned with educational outcomes.

As well, we would recommend that the current financial reporting system is inadequate if we are going to compare delivery costs for like programs among boards, and it needs to be redefined and redesigned.

If we take a look at the adequacy of funding the operating costs, equality of educational opportunity presumes that adequate funding be provided for a given level of local effort in financing. Unfortunately, at the present time, the level of funding deemed by the province to provide the

programs is unrealistic. Virtually all boards—and I am sure it has been mentioned to you many times—exceed the ceilings. This certainly leads to inequities, since the less assessment-wealthy boards must levy a higher mill rate to raise an equivalent per-pupil amount over the ceilings.

This pattern of decreasing rate of provincial financial support over the years raises questions. In fact, I want to ask: Is there a major philosophical shift from a shared responsibility to a provincially mandated local responsibility? I feel that is a question that has to be answered for us and for our taxpayers.

The future of education financing cannot be left as it has been in the past, as a riddle which is authored by the province for local jurisdictions to unravel. In the future, the province needs to announce its goals and its future directions in order that we can operate in an atmosphere of financial certainty. In other words, we have to know what share we are going to be expected to pay.

Education financing needs to be based on realistic levels of expenditure required to provide the agreed upon programs in meeting the goals of education. This estimate needs to be determined with the full consultation of boards and we need to ensure that the goals of education are attainable. When you look at financing and funding, you cannot overlook the cost of the teachers, the level of their salaries and the pupil-teacher ratio. Unfortunately, in the case of PTR there was no consultation and there certainly were cost implications for boards; again, we were not allowed to make the decision about competing priorities and how best to spend our scarce or our limited resources.

Any future finance system must be capable of first establishing and then communicating to school boards the cost of proposed new programs. These predicted costs need to be announced prior to the implementation and then they have to be reviewed afterwards for accuracy, because often we find that those predictions are certainly much less than we had anticipated.

When you are looking at realistic costs, you also need to take into account the differing nature of the costs and how they correlate to the system size and the geographic factors, as well as the variety of programs and services that are provided.

The province also needs to provide clear guidelines as to what programs and what services are to be carried out under the education umbrella. We only need to take a look at day care or child care, or take a look at some of the adult

programs, the continuing education programs that we now offer that were formerly part of other institutions, or take a look at the demand to feed the hungry kids. Should those programs come under the educational umbrella? Any new programs should also bear the scrutiny for both the societal benefits and the costs.

Finally, our last point, and an extremely important one, is the adequacy of funding when it comes to our capital cost. We understand that our investment across this province in capital facilities and equipment amounts to \$17 billion to support elementary and secondary education. In our board alone, we have an investment of \$0.5 billion. We are very concerned over the adequacy of the funding necessary to preserve and to upgrade this investment that we have. We do acknowledge and we do appreciate the recent acceleration when the province provided additional pupil places. However, we do not support the manner in which this has happened.

We are opposed to lot levies and our board is on record. We also do not support the concurrent and unilateral reduction from 75 per cent to 60 per cent of the provincial share for the funding of additional pupil places.

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We would suggest to you, the committee, that you consider studying the financial and other implications of the province funding 100 per cent of the cost of new additional pupil accommodation. It would then be the responsibility of local boards to provide for the upkeep and ongoing maintenance. This could be assured by the requirement that boards establish reserve funds for that purpose.

Unfortunately, the lack of capital funds has been all too evident over the past few years and additional funds are only being provided in response to crisis conditions. This is certainly not a responsible approach to the provision and the preservation of the investment in educational capital.

We feel much more needs to be done and would suggest to you again that a fresh, innovative, long-term approach should be developed for the coming decade.

On the last page, we have summarized for you again the recommendations. I will just highlight for you:

1. We consider education to be an investment in our society.
2. The system need to be responsive to the learners to prepare them for the decade ahead.
3. The source of funds should be as broadly based as possible.

8. The province needs to provide stability in its funding. We need to know what share we can expect.

9. We both need to agree upon publicly stated goals and objectives.

14. We feel provincial support for education must be based on a realistic estimate of costs.

17. When new programs and services are introduced—and I want to stress this again—they need to be made in partnership with local boards. There needs to be consultation and there needs to be accurate costing.

This brings us to the conclusion of our presentation and we would certainly welcome any questions.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for a very extensive and well-thought-out brief. I am pleased to say you have left time for members' questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is a very good brief and I appreciate it. It is nice to see you again.

The Chairman is limiting our questions, so I will make a couple of comments. I think there were a number of very useful suggestions in there for us to look at. Rather than asking questions specifically about them, I want to come right down to the question of accountability.

You rightfully raise the question that if you have mandated programs by the province, what is the local accountability, except for some of the delivery niceties of it, if I can put it that way, rather than the basis. But at the moment, we have a system whereby the amount of money that is coming in from your taxpayers is much different from that which is coming in from taxpayers in northern Ontario and lower-assessment boards, that kind of thing. Yet the accountability presumptions are the same for all boards, whether they are picking up three per cent of the costs, as is the case in some northern boards, or 100 per cent of the costs as it is in Toronto or some place in between, like your situation.

I guess the question begged by some of the things you are asking is, at what level do you cease to have local input and local accountability? That is what I was not sure about, your presumption of needing that local property tax base made more progressive. I was pleased to see that part of it, but you are presuming that there has to be that base for local accountability, local autonomy, and yet right at the moment we have this presumption that a board north of Superior has exactly the same level of accountability as you do, even though it picks up virtually none of the costs. I wonder if you could maybe talk about that a little bit.

Mr Ewasko: If I may reply on behalf of our board, what we are suggesting is the accountability is there for the expenditure, whatever the source of the funding. What we are suggesting, though, is that the accountability cannot be demanded if, for example, programs are mandated and the local boards have no say and no opportunity to provide input in the types of programs that must be delivered.

However, our brief, I think, indicates that if that is going to continue to be done by the province, certainly in terms of delivery of programs—and again, the funds that are being spent are public funds, regardless of where they originate—local boards will continue to have the accountability for delivery costs, but only for that. In terms of whether the programs are truly necessary or are achieving their stated purposes or goals—and some of these goals and purposes are left undefined for boards—we cannot be expected to answer for that. That has to be answered by the partners, or by the entity, and hopefully they will be partners, that provide or decide that these programs will be provided.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I buy that argument. I just do not understand, therefore, the need for the industrial-commercial assessment base, if I can put it that way, or the property tax base to remain with a given board instead of moving to models more like the Quebec model or the British Columbia model, etc, if that is your argument. I accept your argument on that. I just do not understand why you are then saying that you still need that property tax base; even if it were made progressive, that you still need it.

Mr Ewasko: We are suggesting that in order to have the opportunity for a voice, certainly if you pay part of the share on a local basis, you should not be denied the opportunity to have a say in the matter. If that opportunity to participate in the funding is taken away, then perhaps there is an excuse provided to eliminate you from the decision-making process. We are suggesting that there needs to be some stake—we are not defining the amount of that stake—by the local jurisdiction in the funding process to ensure that an adequate voice is maintained in deciding what programs and services are to be provided. That is the only point we are making.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think your point about having more of a say in curriculum and development of the programs is a very important one. I am just not sure why we cannot do that in a constitutional sense rather than tying it to that particular tax base.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. You were very lenient.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Johnston. We are always lenient with you, Mr Keyes.

Mr Keyes: Could we just ask a bit more of your response on the commercial-industrial assessment and the pooling concept. There were about three areas there to catch you on; first of all, your own view about the current pooling on the regional basis but also, what would be the impression of it if it were done provincially, if we truly believe in the educational principle of equality of educational opportunity and how that applies particularly to the commercial assessment in an area such as Waterloo county? Do you want to give it more justification as to where you are on that one? It is currently being studied and probably will be going through this fall.

Mr Ewasko: Again, our brief remains politely silent on that question.

Mr Keyes: I noticed that.

Mr Ewasko: What we are suggesting, though, is that because of the nature of education and the fact that it does have broad benefits, the financing of education in the future should be as broadly based as possible. In terms of our particular board's position on commercial-industrial assessment and the loss of that assessment, we are suggesting that to resolve a problem that I think everyone acknowledges exists, you do not simply take money from one partner and give it to another. That is spreading the misery rather than solving the problem.

Mr Keyes: Could you extend it? On page 3 of your brief, you talked about the ability to pay becoming the focus in determining appropriate taxes. If you want to talk about ability to pay, did you then look at perhaps transferring it entirely to the income tax?

Mr Ewasko: Yes, that is certainly a suggestion that we feel is worthy of study. We are not suggesting that it be the alternative that is perhaps taken by the province. Again, we come back to our point that we do feel that the local jurisdictions should provide some funding to at least have some excuse for maintaining a voice in the decision-making process.

Mr Keyes: Just back to Richard's accountability, do you feel there is less accountability in those boards that get 95 per cent of their funding from the province as opposed to those that get no funding from the province?

Mr Ewasko: Again, no, that is not our position at all. We are saying that public funds are public funds.

The Chairman: That was a very concise answer.

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Mr Jackson: I particularly appreciate recommendation 17 because it is an area we have raised in committee here several times—the notion of new program initiatives, consultation, accurately costing them out and sharing how the ministries arrive at those costings. I think of two examples. On the day care one, which we have yet to face, I have heard two versions. One was from the Minister of Community and Social Services (Mr Sweeney) personally, on how he costed it out and recommended it in cabinet. Then I have heard another version from the education side. So I am still anxious to see what the final version is going to be.

I want to give you an example you have already had to contend with, and that is the differentiated pupil-teacher ratio in the primary division. We have asked several boards that have raised this point about the third element of it, which is what happens after the funding has arrived and you implement the program and assess its impact. On that, we have heard that some boards have had to bulge their enrolments in the junior and intermediate divisions in order to cope with the shortfall in the funding. If you are able to go on record with some reaction to that, I would appreciate it.

But I would ask you if in recommendation 17 you would also want more accountability in terms of how boards provide those programs so that as legislators we can get an assessment as to what impact our decisions are having on the overall program. I see a lot of pinching and shifting going on with school boards and these programs. Not every board is passing it on in tax increases. Some are coping with the shortfall and that is like squeezing a balloon; it is going to bulge somewhere else. Could I get some reaction to that point?

Mrs Witmer: I will try first. First of all, the reduction in the lower class size in the primary area certainly had an impact on our board. We already have many, many portables and we have had to delay the time line established by the province. We are actually behind because, again, it was mandated and it was said, "Thou shalt do this in this year and that year." Unfortunately, because of lack of space, resources and financial support, we had to slow down that process considerably.

The other thing I think you need to remember is that we were negotiating with our teachers for smaller class size. Suddenly, the province

introduced smaller class size and the teachers went after planning time. So you took away something that—

Mr Jackson: Was it off the table at the time, or did that matter?

Mrs Witmer: The lower PTR was on the table, so the teachers went for another issue. It had quite an impact because of lack of consultation. Mr Ewasko might want to respond further.

Mr Ward: I would like to comment from the point of view of school organization. You mentioned the fact that you may have to have a larger PTR in some of the higher grades in order to accommodate that. I think that happened in the first year because there was so little time to deal with it. However, some of the impacts that have occurred this year are more split grades and even artificially adjusting the teacher ratio at that level in order to meet our obligation to the PTR.

I think that goes back to the lack of consultation because putting down policy and procedures without thinking about implementation is not realistic. It takes three to five years to do anything educationally valuable in terms of that kind of an impact in the classroom, but that was not considered. I really hope that in the future we will have an opportunity through consultation to talk about an implementation time that is realistic.

Mr Jackson: I am sorry we do not have more time. I would love to know what you think of destreaming.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the Waterloo County Board of Education on behalf of all committee members for their contribution to our deliberations today. I hope you enjoy Oktoberfest, which I understand is coming up very shortly.

Mrs Witmer: We all leave town. We leave it to the tourists.

The Chairman: The next presentation will be the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Please come forward. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are very pleased to have another presentation from the Ottawa-Carleton area. I think our last two this afternoon are both from the Ottawa area. Please begin by introducing yourselves for the purpose of Hansard. Following that, you will have 30 minutes for your presentation time. We hope that at least a part of that can be reserved for members' questions.

CARLETON ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr MacDonald: On my left is the vice-chairman of our board, Arthur Lamarche, and on

my right is our director of planning, Ron Larkin. My name is Basil MacDonald and I am chairman of the board. I almost think I am appearing at the same committee; I see so many familiar faces here.

Madam Chairman, we will endeavour to stay well within the limits of time you have allocated. We have presented you with a brief and a summary. First, I would like to go through the chairman's remarks and then very quickly go back to the main brief and make certain points on it there. I will start with the chairman's remarks.

The Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board welcomes the opportunity to present this financial brief to the select committee on education. We have prepared a detailed brief which we are presenting to you as our official position. Realizing, as we do, that the committee does not have unlimited time, I am presenting to you a summary of the significant points outlined in our official brief.

Let me begin with the concept of equity. The first fundamental issue associated with the creation of horizontal equity is the establishment of mechanisms to rectify the tremendous differences in assessment wealth of school boards, which results from the uneven geographic distribution of and consequent uneven access to the province's commercial and industrial wealth. The Macdonald commission specifically identified this root problem. Since it was quoted to you just moments ago, I will not repeat it.

The commission also recognized that this problem is not a public-separate school issue. Rather, it is a problem of sharing the province's wealth between assessment-rich and assessment-poor boards.

Table 1 of our brief presents a chart showing the residential and commercial weighting assessments within the region of Ottawa-Carleton in 1989. You will note that within those municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board there is a far greater reliance and burden upon residential assessment, which comprises 94.6 per cent of the assessment in the municipality of Cumberland and 69.7 per cent of the assessment base in the city of Nepean.

From the data presented, it is evident that commercial assessment is very unevenly distributed among the municipalities within the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and is, for the most part, concentrated in the city of Ottawa which contains approximately 77 per cent of the total commercial assessment wealth of the whole region.

Table 2 presents the distribution of residential and commercial assessment within the region as of 27 April 1989. As is clearly evident from the data, the inequity at the municipal level is compounded at the board level. The Carleton Roman Catholic school board's share of commercial assessment is disproportionately low in comparison to residential assessment, ranging from 5.4 per cent in the municipality of Rideau to 18.9 per cent in Cumberland.

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Table 3 on page 5 of our brief shows the relative position of our board in relation to the other boards in our area. In 1989, our board educates 16.67 per cent of the total pupil population of the region, yet has access to less than 7.41 per cent of the region's assessment base.

Another way of demonstrating the stern reality is to say that each Carleton Roman Catholic school board elementary student equates to \$14,105 of weighted assessment as compared with \$33,346 for the Carleton Board of Education, our coterminous board, \$33,589 for the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board and \$68,707 for the Ottawa Board of Education.

Each Carleton Roman Catholic school board secondary student equates to \$29,363 of weighted assessment as compared with \$54,580 for the Carleton Board of Education, \$68,212 for the Ottawa separate board and \$108,882 for secondary students in the Ottawa Board of Education.

In terms of amounts of moneys generated per pupil for equal effort levied against the respective tax bases, each mill levied by the Carleton Roman Catholic school board generates \$14.11 per pupil as compared with \$33.35 for the Carleton Board of Education, \$33.59 for the Ottawa separate board and \$68.71 for the Ottawa Board of Education.

At the secondary level, each mill levied by the Carleton Roman Catholic school board generates \$29.36 per pupil as compared with \$54.58 for the Carleton Board of Education, \$68.21 for the Ottawa separate school board and \$108.88 for the Ottawa Board of Education.

These figures are so dramatic that to allow the current condition to prevail would be to totally negate the principle of equality and make us vulnerable when trying to comply with the government-sponsored initiatives, whether we talk about the reduction of the ratio in grades 1 and 2 or the extension of our kindergarten programs. We believe that the six-year implementation plan is not useful in meeting the financial responsibilities we are faced with in the

near future. We would prefer an immediate implementation; however, we appreciate the difficulty this would create and would recommend that a compromise would be to implement the plan in four years.

To conclude our remarks on the matter of equity, immediate reform is imperative. The Carleton Roman Catholic school board is an assessment-poor board that operates presently under severely adverse financial constraints to provide comparable programs, pupil-teacher ratios, salaries and facilities in a highly competitive educational market.

We wish to emphasize that our ratepayers, through their work, through their purchases of goods and services and through their shareholding, contribute to the wealth and success of commerce throughout the region and the province and are entitled to a more equitable share of the proceeds from this revenue source.

Now, turning to the concept of adequacy, the explanatory notes to the 1989 general legislative grant indicate that the basic equity of the grant plan has been eroded over the years and that adjustments to the grant plan are required if the provincial objective of equity is to be attained. That there has been erosion of equity is ascribed to the fact that boards' expenditures per pupil have increased at a rate faster than the increases in the provincial ceiling.

Table 5 in our brief graphically illustrates the overceiling expenditure pattern of the four boards in our area. At the elementary level, the local tax effort required to generate the above-ceiling expenditure per pupil expressed in mills ranges from 13.82 mills for the Carleton Roman Catholic school board elementary pupil through 27.38 for the Carleton Board of Education, 21.11 for the Ottawa separate school board and 24.25 mills for the Ottawa Board of Education, while the actual dollars generated are \$195 for our board, \$913 for the Carleton Board of Education, \$709 for the Ottawa separate school board and \$1,660 for the Ottawa Board of Education.

If, at the elementary level, the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board were to spend at the same above-ceiling level as the Carleton Board of Education, for example, it would require a tax effort of 64.71 mills as compared with 27.38 for the Carleton Board of Education; that is to say, greater than a twofold tax effort would be required.

At the secondary level, the local tax effort to generate the above-ceiling expenditure per pupil, expressed in mills, ranges from 34.57 mills for us to 41.83 for the Carleton Board of Education,

90.97 for the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board and 76.23 mills for the Ottawa Board of Education. This actually raises for us \$1,015, for the Carleton Board of Education \$1,228, for the Ottawa separate school board \$2,671 and for the Ottawa Board of Education \$2,238.

If at the secondary level, the Carleton Roman Catholic school board were to spend the same above-ceiling as the Carleton Board of Education, for example, it would require a tax effort of 41.83 mills as compared with 22.5 mills for the CBE; that is to say, approximately a twofold tax effort would be required.

We strongly recommend that the government establish realistic ceilings for elementary and secondary purposes to ensure an adequate level of support. Consideration should be given to providing all grants at the board's rate of grant. All new programs that are mandated should be fully supported by the government at the board's rate of grant.

We feel that the government's proposed plan to finance capital projects at 60 per cent will have a disastrous effect on our ability to financially support our building program. This conviction is particularly problematic for growth boards that have a low assessment base. You are probably aware that the lot levy plan will not adequately cover our needs and that we anticipate a significant increase in our debentured debt burden.

Finally, we believe that the concept of accountability should be clearly articulated. Currently, we are heavily burdened by the expectations that are presently with us, yet increasingly, because of the government's initiatives, we find that new programs are costly and therefore difficult to accommodate within the grant ceilings. It would appear that it is only a matter of time before the camel's back will be broken. We ask you to carefully monitor the ability of boards such as ours to provide quality programs within the resources available to us.

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In closing, we ask for your support. We ask you to be sensitive to our needs. We are prepared to use our resources efficiently and effectively to implement the programs of the government. We believe that we must solve the financial dilemma together, because in the final analysis we are partners in satisfying the legitimate needs of the pupils entrusted to our care.

Now I would like to briefly go through our brief, only parts of it. On page 2 of our brief, and this is the formal brief that we gave to you, on the

concept of equity, the first fundamental issue associated with the creation of horizontal equity is the establishment of mechanisms to rectify the tremendous difference in assessment wealth. The second fundamental issue associated with the creation of horizontal equity is the degree to which the burden of financing of education to an established ceiling level is shared between the province and the local assessment base.

Grant weighting factors have been introduced to create vertical equity within the grant plan. Suffice it to say, in concert with the committee on the costs of education, that rather than instil equity they tended to confer an additional benefit upon already wealthy boards. The Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board applauds the present direction towards the elimination of grant weighting factors and towards a redistribution of the moneys involved.

Now, if we could turn to page 7, I am repeating myself here: The Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board is an assessment-poor board and operates presently under severe adverse financial constraints to provide comparable programs, pupil-teacher ratios, salaries and facilities in a highly competitive educational market.

On page 8, on the concept of adequacy, in sharing the responsibility of financing education with local boards, the province is guided by the following principles, and I quote from the Ministry of Education, but I will not read it.

To go on a little farther, the background papers of the Macdonald commission identify a number of critical problems in the foundation grant program and they need to be addressed and they are outlined there.

On page 10, we believe that the ceiling levels for elementary and secondary purposes are presently inadequate. Our 1989 above-ceiling expenditures are projected to be \$778 per pupil elementary and \$886 per pupil secondary. As to what an adequate ceiling is, we will have to await an answer on that. None the less, we suggest to the select committee that our programs and costs reasonably approximate what constitutes a base level of programs and services.

Towards the bottom of page 10, the 1989 general legislative grants provided for an increase of four per cent, and memorandum B:2 provided that the grants would be retroactively recalculated and adjusted to ensure that only the amount originally budgeted by the province would be spent.

The calculation of year-to-year increases in ceiling must take into account real growth in

pupil population and increases in the cost of goods and services. It is our understanding that the effective increase in the GLG in 1989 is less than four per cent having given effect to growth in population, and that the CPI for Ontario is running at an annual rate of approximately 5.4 per cent.

I would like to move on to page 12 at the bottom of the page. On the matter of financial accountability, there appears to be a widening gulf between provincial expectations and reality as defined by a board's ability to sustain the delivery of services, given the inequities of assessment and the inadequacies of the base level of support presently. Delicately put, there seems to be a growing intrusion of provincial objectives into local spending priorities.

Finally, on page 14, in conclusion, the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board reiterates its support for those budget initiatives of the government that have been designed to create a greater degree of equity in the funding model. While not perfect, the plan of action will positively improve the lot of more than 80 per cent of public and separate school boards in the province.

If you have any questions you would like to address to us, or if my colleagues would like to make any points, please do.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr MacDonald. We have some questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for your brief. As with almost all that we have received, it is a very nice mix of statistical backdrop, which is useful for us, as well as thematic coherence, which we are getting a fair amount of, about a very incoherent system.

You seem to very specifically allude to the fact that the lot levies are not going to meet your needs and that you see a debenture debt load increasing. I presume from the way you were talking about it that you have actually done projections of this. Maybe you could give us some information about how you see that working.

Mr MacDonald: I would like Mr Larkin to respond to that.

Mr Larkin: On that particular subject, we have submitted a brief outlining our position with respect to lot levies. We have a number of concerns with the concept. To begin with, we have a moral dilemma with regard to imposing more charges on new home owners. That is the first concern we have.

Second, in our jurisdiction, as Mrs O'Neill knows very well, we have a lot of growth taking

place, and a lot of that growth has actually taken place. We just do not believe that keeping lot levies within reasonable limits will provide the necessary funding to meet those needs. We have upwards of 30 per cent of our pupils currently in portable classrooms. I think that had the lot levy concept come on stream perhaps 10 years ago, it would have solved a lot of our financial problems. We have great concern with regard to the mechanics of apportioning the moneys resulting from the lot levies, that aspect of it.

In the final analysis, we do not believe that lot levies in themselves provide a total solution to the matter of providing funding for new facilities. We are going to be compelled to get into lot levies, but we think it will be a combination of lot levy moneys combined with squeezing, again, our current budgets to help assist the funding. We are also going to be into some debenture funding, which again poses some real concerns for us because right at the moment we are taxed to the limit with debenture load.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What are you at, at the moment?

Mr Larkin: I do not have the precise figures, but I suspect that our debenture load at present would be in the range of \$15 million.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other thing I want to ask you about is the fundamental question of equity—it comes out of Macdonald's report, as well—which you do not deal with. Within your own figures, you can see how even the Catholic board in Ottawa does much better than you are doing in the Carleton area. The same would apply to adjacent areas that can be seen to be feeding off that Ottawa commercial base, whether it is Renfrew county, my background, or whether it is Noble's area or Glengarry-Prescott.

One of the things Macdonald talked about was moving towards two things: (1) province-wide pooling of commercial and industrial, and (2) some kind of education income tax that would relieve the property taxpayer, or at least put it on the merits of capacity to pay rather than just on the fact of owning a home in one location rather than another. I wonder if you could respond to the fact that those are two of the parts of the Macdonald report that you do not seem to address directly.

Mr MacDonald: We deliberately did not do that because we have been on record time and time again saying that local pooling is not our cup of tea. We think there should be provincial pooling. We think it is the only fair and equitable way. In dealing with the brief, as you noticed, the chairman's remarks were cut way down. We

would have covered that if we had had an hour and a half, but again, within the terms you gave us—but we are on record of not being in favour of the local pooling.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about making the property tax base more progressive?

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Mr MacDonald: The board does not have a position on that as such that I know of.

Mrs O'Neill: I do not have a question. I think I likely do know this board as well as any that will come before us. I would like to say, however, gentlemen, that I think this is a rather unique presentation in your table 2. We have not had any other board come before us to show us in such a very vivid way the discrepancies that can take place within one board about the assessment base in which you have to deal and the equalized assessment and the effect that has on individual municipalities. I thank you for that. I think it is very handy for us to have this backup chart.

I had not heard before your official position on lot levies. I guess what you say is true. It has come a little later. The only question I have is I am surprised that 80 per cent of the boards in the province are going to benefit. Where did you get that? I did not think it would be nearly that high. You are talking about the commercial-industrial pooling concept. Is that correct?

Mr MacDonald: And we are talking over the six-year period that it is being implemented.

Mrs O'Neill: That is a very high percentage. It has to be somewhat good.

Mr Keyes: Perhaps you did the right thing. Of course, you would not do it if it was not going to benefit your board.

Mrs O'Neill: I did not think we were doing so much good as what I guess I imagined.

Mr MacDonald: We do not disagree with you that it has a very large element of goodness in it. We think it would have been better had it been province-wide.

As far as the tables are concerned, we left this to the Ottawa regional area because it was easier for us to do it. If we were comparing it with Renfrew and Prescott-Russell and so on, the figures would of course vary. We had no figures at the moment on the other board in the area which will be addressing you shortly, the French-language board.

Mrs O'Neill: May I ask, do you belong to the new coalition of growth boards? Have you joined that? I understand there is a new coalition within the province for growth boards.

Mr MacDonald: They have not told us about it.

Mrs O'Neill: There are some separate boards within it.

Mr MacDonald: Oh?

Mrs O'Neill: I think there are about eight or 10 boards. Does any other member of the committee remember that? It was in one of the presentations yesterday, the coalition for growth boards. There were eight or 10.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Eight boards.

Mrs O'Neill: But some of them were separate, were they not?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, in the growth areas in the greater Toronto area, or whatever you call that thing.

Mr Jackson: The greater taxation area.

Mr MacDonald: A number of the Toronto areas supported the lot levy system. We made a presentation to Mr Nixon on that, pointing out what we considered were the shortcomings of it. We were not necessarily against it. We think the thing is that the jury is still out on it. But from what we see about it, we are not terribly enthusiastic.

The Acting Chairman (Mr Furlong): Thank you very much for your attendance here today and for the presentation of your brief. It certainly has been appreciated.

I understand the next presentation will be in French and that you all have the monitors.

Bonjour et bienvenue au comité spécial de l'éducation. Vous représentez la section catholique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton. Vous pouvez commencer, premièrement, par faire les présentations aux fins du Journal des débats.

CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON – SECTION CATHOLIQUE

M. Landriault: Mon nom est Rodrigue Landriault; je suis président de la section catholique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton. A ma droite, le directeur de l'éducation de la section, M. Pierre Maril; à ma gauche, M. Félicien Roussy, trésorier et surintendant des affaires de la section; et, à l'extrême gauche, M^{me} Jocelyne Ladouceur, conseillère de la section. Je voudrais, tout d'abord, vous dire quelques mots.

Le Président suppléant (M. Furlong): Excusez-moi; avant de commencer votre présentation, je dois vous avertir que vous avez

30 minutes en tout. J'espère que vous nous laisserez un peu de temps à la fin pour nous permettre de vous poser des questions.

M. Landriault: J'espère aussi qu'il y en aura assez. On va laisser plus de temps pour les questions que pour la présentation; en effet, je n'ai pas l'intention de lire le mémoire, mais tout simplement de le revoir avec vous.

Je voudrais vous dire quelques mots au sujet de notre conseil, qui est probablement le plus nouveau de la province. A ma connaissance, il l'est; la loi a moins d'un an. C'est certainement le premier du genre en Ontario. C'est un défi très intéressant à relever, mais vous comprendrez que, étant si jeune, notre conseil ne dispose d'aucune statistique.

En ce moment, alors que le mois d'octobre approche à grands pas, nous n'avons pas encore approuvé de budget, parce qu'on attend encore le montant exact des subventions qui seront octroyées par le ministère pour 1989.

Notre conseil compte 14 000 élèves dans 39 écoles élémentaires et trois écoles secondaires. Je peux vous affirmer – sans avoir de statistiques, comme je vous l'ai indiqué – que notre base d'évaluation est la plus basse de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton. Nous couvrons tout le territoire des quatre autres conseils déjà en place.

Alors, si je peux me référer brièvement au mémoire lui-même, je voudrais d'abord remercier le comité de nous donner l'occasion de lui faire connaître nos opinions au sujet du financement. Je peux vous dire que la section se rallie aux deux principes directeurs: l'égalité des chances et la répartition équitable.

Malheureusement, à notre avis, le nouveau modèle, qui constitue un pas vers l'équité, n'arrive pas à l'assurer complètement. Nous reconnaissons que la qualité de l'éducation est une responsabilité qui est partagée entre la province et les localités, mais nous craignons que les mécanismes qu'on nous propose ne puissent pas arriver à corriger la situation.

Il est bien connu que l'équité fiscale et l'égalité des chances n'existent pas à l'heure actuelle. Certains conseils sont grandement favorisés – certains beaucoup plus que d'autres – dans les formules de financement actuelles. Le recours au système judiciaire, et on y fait allusion à la page 2 de notre mémoire, a confirmé le droit à un traitement égal et juste et le droit à l'équivalence des services. Il faudra s'adapter aux nouvelles réalités; ce que notre mémoire cherche à indiquer, c'est comment on peut parvenir à cet objectif.

Etant donné la nouveauté de notre conseil, notre base d'évaluation est incomplète. Je n'ai pas l'intention de faire un long procès à la Loi 125, qui avait certaines déficiences et qui a créé des difficultés. Le processus du recensement de 1988-1989 a fait que les listes de contribuables du conseil francophone ne sont pas complètes. Le processus prendra donc plus de temps pour être terminé.

L'effet de ce manque de base d'évaluation est double chez nous. Evidemment, comme tous les autres conseils qui ne reçoivent pas de taxe commerciale et industrielle, nous sommes privés de la source de financement qui viendrait de cette évaluation-là.

Mais étant donné que notre base d'évaluation est incomplète, si la formule proposée est adoptée, c'est-à-dire si on se base sur l'évaluation résidentielle, nous allons souffrir doublement : on va non seulement perdre la base d'évaluation résidentielle qu'on a pas actuellement, mais on va perdre également une partie de la base commerciale qui nous reviendrait.

Il est assez clair qu'il est essentiel pour un conseil, certainement dans la région d'Ottawa, de dépasser les plafonds dans ses dépenses. Les conseils scolaires, qu'ils soient publics, catholiques ou francophones, doivent éduquer les élèves. L'équivalence des services à laquelle on est tenue et les attentes des parents nous obligent à dépasser les plafonds.

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Evidemment, la seule façon de récupérer cet argent-là, c'est d'aller le chercher au niveau des impôts locaux. Il faut avoir une base d'évaluation. Nous soumettons – et c'est notre première recommandation – qu'afin d'arriver à une répartition équitable, les principes d'égalité exigent que la répartition de la taxe commerciale et industrielle se fasse par élève et par effectifs.

Actuellement, le contribuable qui ne s'identifie pas devient automatiquement un contribuable anglophone, ce qui, à mon avis, est non seulement injuste, mais contraire à la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés. Comme je l'ai indiqué plus tôt, la répartition des taxes corporatives, industrielles et commerciales, basée sur l'évaluation résidentielle, amplifiera ce problème dans notre cas.

Alors, notre première recommandation, c'est que la répartition de l'assiette d'évaluation soit fondée sur les effectifs scolaires. Etant donné la situation particulière de notre conseil, une compensation temporaire, étalée sur la période de temps nécessaire pour corriger la situation,

devrait être accordée pour atteindre le plein potentiel de l'assiette d'évaluation.

Ensuite, il y a la question des subventions pour dépenses en immobilisations. Nous avons indiqué le nombre d'élèves que nous avons dans les classes amovibles. Dans le secteur Carleton, un élève sur trois – 33 pour cent – se trouve dans une classe amovible ou dans un complexe de classes amovibles. C'est donc dire que certains élèves risquent de passer les cycles élémentaire et secondaire sans jamais avoir étudié dans une véritable salle de classe, mais en suivant tous leurs cours dans la cour d'école.

Nous recommandons donc que le gouvernement augmente le montant annuel des subventions pour dépenses en immobilisations destinées aux élèves. L'an dernier, nous n'avons à peu près rien eu, et c'est la même chose pour l'année en cours.

Alors, en guise de conclusion, nous croyons que, malgré les efforts de redressement fournis et les progrès qu'annonce le document du mois de mars, l'équité ne sera pas atteinte si on conserve la formule actuelle.

Notre conseil – et je pense qu'il faut le répéter – couvre un territoire desservi par quatre conseils de langue anglaise. Les exigences du ministère quant aux programmes sont les mêmes pour nous que pour les autres ; cependant, les coûts sont peut-être plus élevés étant donné la dispersion de nos effectifs.

Les attentes des parents sont les mêmes quant aux locaux et aux frais de construction et de rénovation. Les salaires des enseignants et du personnel doivent être équivalents. Si la formule qui est proposée est adoptée, l'accès de notre conseil aux ressources sera différent et inférieur. Il nous semble qu'il faudrait en venir à une répartition basée sur le nombre d'élèves, comme le sont d'ailleurs les subventions du ministère.

C'est le mémoire que nous soumettons ; vous trouverez à la fin un résumé de nos recommandations. S'il y a des questions, je peux toujours essayer d'y répondre.

Mme la Présidente : Merci de votre présentation. Est-ce qu'il y a des questions ? M. Villeneuve.

M. Villeneuve : Merci de nous avoir présenté votre mémoire. Je vous félicite sur le fait que vous soyez le plus nouveau conseil scolaire en Ontario.

L'assiette d'évaluation, c'est toujours un fameux problème, surtout quand on considère la façon dont le recensement a été fait. Le système que vous utilisez a-t-il la double majorité ?

M. Landriault : A l'intérieur du conseil ?

M. Villeneuve : A l'intérieur du conseil.

M. Landriault : Pas pour les domaines qui relèvent de la section catholique.

M. Villeneuve : Directement ?

M. Landriault : Oui. Il y a des choses communes, mais il y a beaucoup de choses, comme la pédagogie, le salaire des enseignants, les dépenses en immobilisations et la planification de la construction, qui sont distinctes. Une fois la construction faite, l'entité légale, c'est le conseil, qui devient alors le propriétaire des locaux ; mais la planification de la construction se fait au niveau des sections.

M. Villeneuve : Du côté de la répartition de l'évaluation, une fois que nous aurons un fonds commun – je suppose – il se posera la question suivante : selon vous, selon votre conseil scolaire, est-ce que la répartition des fonds communs devrait alors être basée sur l'évaluation, sur la population scolaire ou sur autre chose ? Est-ce que vous pourriez nous dire ce que vous en pensez ?

M. Landriault : Selon nous, ça devrait être basé sur la population scolaire, sur le nombre d'élèves. On a l'obligation de donner la même éducation à l'élève, qu'il soit dans un conseil scolaire ou dans un autre. On couvre le même territoire ; on est tenus aux mêmes dépenses, aux mêmes programmes. Je pense que c'est reconnu maintenant par à peu près tout le monde : on ne peut pas donner la qualité à laquelle les gens s'attendent sans dépasser les plafonds.

Alors, il faut dépasser les plafonds. Si on le fait uniquement sur une base d'évaluation résidentielle, je vous ai signalé dans le mémoire les difficultés que nous avons rencontrées pour récupérer l'évaluation résidentielle que nous aurions dû avoir. Mais tout ce qu'on fait, c'est de continuer, parce qu'il n'est pas évident que le nombre d'élèves qu'un conseil devra instruire sera le même et que les proportions seront les mêmes.

J'ai vu plus tôt aujourd'hui certains chiffres – Actuellement, je pense qu'on a 1,1 pour cent de l'évaluation commerciale. Si on adoptait la base d'évaluation résidentielle, on serait à quelque chose comme sept pour cent.

Si on adoptait tout simplement la répartition de la population – ça peut être difficile d'identifier un individu là où il se situe, mais disons par population – on serait à peu près à douze pour cent. La population d'Ottawa-Carleton est beaucoup plus élevée en ce qui concerne les francophones : c'est de 18 ou 20 pour cent. Si on

allait par élève, ce serait 17 ou 18. J'ai vu ça juste avant d'arriver.

M. Villeneuve : Ce qui serait représentatif –

M. Landriault : Ce qui serait représentatif de la population. Selon nous, la seule formule réellement équitable pour arriver à cette répartition, c'est par le nombre d'élèves, parce que c'est pour les élèves qu'il faut dépenser. Si on a 1000 élèves, ça va coûter pour 1000 élèves.

M. Villeneuve : Comme vous le savez, le gouvernement a annoncé qu'il serait question de fonds communs, mais la façon de répartir ces fonds communs reste encore à déterminer. Alors –

M. Landriault : C'est pourquoi on a fait un mémoire très court. Nos autres positions, je pense, sont connues depuis de longues années. On a abordé deux questions qu'on considèrerait de très grande importance ; on n'a pas voulu aborder d'autres points. Chez nous, on pense que ces questions-là sont capitales.

M. Villeneuve : J'aimerais vous poser une dernière question sur le partage des biens que vous avez en commun avec les autres commissions scolaires, comme les moyens de transport, les locaux, le personnel. Ne voyez-vous aucune façon de procéder de façon économique, tout en assurant une éducation adéquate pour vos élèves, mais en faisant certains partages de biens mobiliers et de personnel ?

M. Landriault : Il s'est fait, conformément à la Loi 109, un partage avec trois conseils, ce qui a été relativement facile. De toute façon, ça c'est fait et ça n'a pas été en appel. Avec un conseil, c'est en appel ; la décision doit être prise dans les prochains jours. Mais ça, ça ne répond pas –

Les biens que les francophones avaient accumulés dans les divers conseils, et avec lesquels ils sont partis dans le nouveau conseil, ne sont pas des fonds de fonctionnement. Ce n'est peut-être pas un très bon exemple que de parler d'un couple qui se sépare, mais je suis certain qu'il y a ici des députés qui ont siégé dans d'autres comités et qui connaissent bien la Loi de 1986 sur le droit de la famille. Quand l'épouse part avec la moitié de la maison ou le chalet, ou que le mari garde certains biens, ça ne veut pas dire qu'il n'y a pas d'obligation de soutien. Alors, le soutien, c'est l'équivalent, je suppose, de la taxe, des fonds de fonctionnement, des fonds de roulement.

On ne peut pas dire que le fait qu'on a un terrain, qu'on a certaines choses, qu'on a des écoles où mettre les élèves – qui, comme on peut le voir, sont déjà surpeuplées : un élève sur trois

est dans une salle de classe portative – que cela va permettre au conseil de fonctionner.

Si on vend notre capital – Dans votre comté, M. Villeneuve, si les cultivateurs vendent leur terrain pour essayer de faire fonctionner leur grange, ou s'ils vendent leur grange pour être capables d'ensemencer leur terrain, ça ne fait pas une bonne récolte, à moyen ou à long terme.

M. Villeneuve : Il y a un dilemme. C'est un des problèmes que nous aimerions régler de façon réelle, tout en faisant certaines économies. C'est le but. C'est un des objectifs de notre comité.

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M. Landriault : On comprend les difficultés du comité, et on essaie de l'aider à résoudre ces difficultés.

M. Villeneuve : Merci bien, M. Landriault, c'est apprécié énormément.

M. Roussy : Egalement, en réponse à M. Villeneuve, j'aimerais peut-être vous signaler que le conseil plénier offre des services aux deux sections. C'est, comme de raison, à double majorité.

Je dois vous dire que pour tous les services administratifs, qu'il s'agisse des systèmes de comptabilité, des salaires, des achats ou des transports, il existe un service administratif central qui dessert les deux sections, c'est-à-dire qu'il exécute les décisions des deux côtés. Quand on parle strictement d'administration, les seules questions administratives qui demeurent dans les sections – je pense que c'est très important en vue de la répartition de l'évaluation – sont : l'équipe d'admission et d'évaluation et la planification, qui demeurent sous la tutelle des sections. Alors, il y a déjà un échange de services au centre.

M. Villeneuve : Selon vous, ça fonctionne assez bien ? C'est tout nouveau.

M. Roussy : A mon avis, je peux seulement témoigner que depuis le 6 février, on a monté une structure administrative qui semble répondre aux premiers besoins du système. On a seulement pris en mains la gestion de nos écoles le 1^{er} septembre. Je dois vous dire qu'on est assez fiers que tous les élèves aient été transportés à nos écoles et que tout le personnel ait été payé. Alors, c'est déjà un départ.

M. Furlong : Merci de nous avoir présenté votre mémoire. Dans la recommandation numéro 3, où vous demandez que le gouvernement augmente les subventions des dépenses en immobilisations, est-ce que vous avez un montant pour ça ? Le montant est déjà calculé pour

l'année passée, pour cette année et pour les deux prochaines années. Je pense que vous croyez que ce n'est pas assez, parce que vous avez des salles de classe portatives.

Je pense que vous en avez – je ne me souviens plus très bien – un total de 65 à Carleton. Quand on compare Carleton à d'autres secteurs de la province, comme le mien à Durham, ce n'est plus 65, c'est 750. Il faut que ce soit équilibré. Est-ce que vous avez pensé à l'impôt pour le lotissement ? Le projet de loi que la province veut faire adopter, pour que les commissions scolaires puissent percevoir –

M. Landriault : On a eu l'occasion de rencontrer le Trésorier, M. Nixon, l'année dernière. Il nous a expliqué les grandes lignes de l'impôt pour le lotissement. Je ne sais pas exactement ce que ce prélèvement pourrait nous apporter.

Je partage un peu les craintes qui ont été exprimées cet après-midi : peut-on continuer d'augmenter les coûts des nouvelles maisons ? Je sais qu'il faut que les fonds viennent de quelque part, mais ne devraient-ils pas aussi venir de la localité ?

Cela, c'est une difficulté, bien sûr ; ça ne répond certainement pas aux subventions des dépenses en immobilisations nécessaires pour rénover ou pour entretenir nos écoles, ce qui est notre quatrième recommandation. En fusionnant les deux conseils, les deux sections françaises des conseils ou même les quatre avec la section catholique – A Ottawa, il y a beaucoup de vieilles écoles qui ont besoin de rénovations et pour lesquelles on n'a pas d'argent. A Carleton, c'est le contraire : on a besoin de beaucoup de nouvelles écoles.

Je ne pourrais pas vous dire, ne sachant pas ce que la loi va prévoir, ce que l'impôt pour le lotissement peut nous apporter ; je ne pourrais pas vous le dire. Mais, à mon avis, ça ne sera pas suffisant, parce qu'il s'agit d'un retard qui date de plusieurs années.

L'an dernier, ce qu'on a eu, je pense, pour l'année 1990, c'était simplement une question de quelques réparations d'égouts, de fosses septiques. Dans une école, c'est absolument essentiel ; ça ne pouvait pas attendre. Il y a la question des jardins d'enfants ; on me dit qu'on a obtenu 91 000 \$ l'an dernier.

Il y a toute la question des maternelles et des jardins d'enfants. On n'a déjà pas de place ; on a 33 pour cent des élèves dans des salles de classe portatives. Est-ce qu'on va porter ça à 40 pour cent ou 45 pour cent ? Malheureusement, les jeunes familles se retrouvent dans les nouveaux

lots où est le manque d'écoles, pas dans le centre-ville.

Je pense aussi qu'il faut parler de nos besoins au niveau du secondaire, où la croissance est assez rapide. Si on regarde la section est de notre région en particulier, dont la population augmente à un rythme phénoménal, ce qui amène beaucoup d'enfants au secondaire — Pour ceux qui connaissent la région d'Ottawa, on a le collège catholique Samuel-Genest, qui est une ancienne école, et où nous avons, je crois, 1200 élèves ou 1250 élèves, si je ne me trompe pas.

On a un besoin dans l'ouest de la ville ; le secondaire dans l'ouest de la ville n'est pas desservi. Alors, il y a un grand besoin d'immobilisations pour desservir l'enseignement élémentaire, parce qu'on a un grand nombre de nos élèves dans des salles de classe portatives, mais aussi le secondaire.

Mentionnons aussi qu'on a été très heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement nous autorisait, à partir de septembre 1990, à avoir des jardins d'enfants à temps plein. Si vous regardez le nombre de salles de classe portatives, en particulier dans la région de Carleton, on voit mal comment il nous sera possible de mettre ça en oeuvre. Alors, le dilemme auquel notre conseil doit faire face, c'est qu'il existe une section où nous pourrions peut-être le faire, la région d'Ottawa, mais ce sont les mêmes parents qui appuient le conseil dans la région de Carleton. On va avoir beaucoup de difficulté ou on va devoir rajouter un grand nombre de salles de classe portatives.

Mme la Présidente : Une question supplémentaire ?

M. Villeneuve : Au lieu d'imposer des taxes sur des lots non construits, ne pourrait-on pas plutôt instituer un prélèvement sur toutes les ventes immobilières et résidentielles, à un taux beaucoup moins élevé mais qui couvrirait toute la gamme ? En effet, certains vont acheter des lots vides pour y construire — mais ce ne sont pas nécessairement eux qui vont profiter des écoles.

Auriez-vous une orientation plus positive si le prélèvement se faisait sur toutes les propriétés résidentielles, à un taux beaucoup moins élevé ? Ou est-ce que vous préféreriez un impôt pour le lotissement ?

M. Landriault : Je dois vous dire que le conseil n'a pas de position officielle sur cette question. Si vous voulez mon opinion personnelle, il me semble qu'il serait plus équitable d'ajuster les droits de cession immobilière sur les terrains, quand on sait que les jeunes familles veulent se faire construire une maison, que

d'essayer tout simplement d'augmenter l'impôt de lotissement de 1500 \$, 2000 \$ ou 3000 \$.

Quitte à effectuer un prélèvement, il faut que ça en vaille la peine. Ce serait peut-être plus équitable si c'était fait de la façon dont vous le proposez. Mais je ne peux pas dire que c'est la position du conseil. On a eu une présentation et certains documents — Pour le moment, nous attendons de voir le contenu du projet de loi. A ce moment-là, il nous sera possible d'en évaluer l'impact. Est-ce que ça va être un fonds commun ? Comment cet impôt sera-t-il réparti ? Est-ce que chez nous, par exemple, trois conseils vont imposer le même lot, ce qui pourrait arriver ? Qui va le prélever ? Chaque conseil va-t-il aller chercher 1500 \$ par lot, 4500 \$ par maison ? Je ne le sais pas, mais il y a trois conseils sur le même territoire.

M. Villeneuve : La répartition sera toujours difficile. C'est la raison du dilemme auquel le comité est encore confronté : est-ce que nous nous limitons à des lots non construits, des lots créés récemment, ou est-ce que nous devons considérer, comme vous le disiez, les droits de cession immobilière ?

M. Landriault : Si vous avez acheté un lot il y a cinq ans et que vous avez construit la moitié d'un duplex, et que vous désiriez maintenant construire l'autre moitié, est-ce taxable ? Je l'ignore. En ce qui me concerne, quand j'ai entendu parler de ce projet, j'avais beaucoup de questions, mais il me manque encore beaucoup de réponses.

M. Villeneuve : On en est toujours au même point.

M. Marcil : Si vous le permettez, on pourrait peut-être mentionner la Loi 30 qui, à un moment donné, a eu un certain rôle à jouer là-dedans. Le nombre d'écoles secondaires que nous avons obtenues ne répond absolument pas à nos besoins. Actuellement, les négociations sont terminées, mais il y a encore 50 pour cent de nos élèves du secondaire qui sont dans des écoles publiques. Nous devons payer des frais, dans le cas présent, à la section publique. D'ailleurs, une grande partie du budget de cette section est tout simplement un transfert de fonds que nous devons faire pour pouvoir donner une éducation valable à nos élèves du secondaire.

Toutes nos écoles secondaires — nous en avons trois actuellement — sont remplies à pleine capacité. Nous ajoutons des salles de classe portatives, mais nous arrivons à un point où nos écoles comptent 1200, 1300, 1400 élèves. Nous avons entre autres une école qui a débuté avec 70 élèves, il y a dix ans passés, et qui compte

aujourd'hui 1200 élèves, et c'est le cas dans la plupart de nos écoles.

On parlait tantôt de fonds des immobilisations. Pour les trois prochaines années, nous avons obtenu un peu plus d'un million de dollars. Un million de dollars, quand il faut construire des écoles secondaires, quand 33 pour cent de nos élèves sont dans des salles de classe portatives, cela ne correspond absolument pas à nos besoins.

Comme notre président le mentionnait tantôt, si on regarde l'autre partie – Il faut comprendre que notre territoire est quand même très différent des autres, parce qu'on a regroupé deux régions. Dans une de ces régions, celle d'Ottawa, les écoles ne conviennent absolument plus maintenant et elles vont devoir subir d'importantes rénovations.

1600

M. R. F. Johnston : La plupart de mes questions ont déjà été posées ou on y a répondu. Mais je pense que vous avez un grand problème : connaître votre base financière. Quand pensez-vous avoir une idée plus nette de votre base financière réelle – pour répondre à votre propre question et aux autres questions dont vous avez parlées ?

M. Landriault : Pour le moment, nous fonctionnons sans budget, ce qui est très difficile. C'est comme essayer de faire un travail de chirurgien dans le noir. Je ne peux pas répondre à votre question. Nous attendons des informations incessamment. Il est évident que, rendu au mois d'octobre, il sera très tard pour apporter des corrections pour l'année 1989 ; il sera trop tard. Il n'y aura rien à faire pour cette année.

En ce qui concerne la question de l'évaluation et de l'établissement de la base d'évaluation, nous avons fait une campagne et établi une certaine évaluation résidentielle. Les montants vont augmenter progressivement, mais ça va prendre un certain nombre d'années.

Le fait est que pendant des années, les gens recevaient un avis d'évaluation qui portait la mention « francophone séparé ». Pour eux, l'école séparée, c'était leur école. Maintenant, les imprimés portent la mention « francophone catholique ». Cela prend un certain temps avant que toute la population soit informée – Je regardais tout à l'heure, dans un autre mémoire, les statistiques de la ville de Vanier, qui est à environ 80 pour cent francophone, et je me rendais compte que les résultats étaient d'à peu près 50/50. Ce n'est pas normal, mais ça va se corriger avec le temps, dans deux ans, cinq ans, dix ans. Je ne saurais dire quand.

M. R. F. Johnston : Bonne chance.

M. Marcil : Si vous me le permettez, c'est justement la raison pour laquelle, dans nos deux recommandations – Il est clair que le but de la première recommandation est d'effectuer une répartition selon le nombre d'élèves. Pour nous, dans notre situation, il est évident que ce serait plus juste. Selon la méthode employée actuellement, nous recommandons que pendant les cinq, six ou sept premières années – parce que, selon nous, c'est le nombre minimum d'années dont nous aurons besoin pour atteindre la totalité de notre population – nous puissions bénéficier d'une compensation quelconque.

On sait que dans le document déposé au mois de mars, on indiquait que pour les conseils publics, il n'y aura absolument aucune perte et qu'on prévoiera une méthode permettant de répondre aux pertes pour les six prochaines années. Je pense que c'est un peu le même cas pour nous. Si on prend en considération notre situation particulière, il devrait y avoir des contributions spéciales pendant ces années-là.

Je voudrais cependant vous faire remarquer que nous terminons actuellement notre première année et, comme on l'a mentionné à plusieurs reprises, nous n'avons même pas de budget. Je pense qu'il est difficile de se rendre compte des difficultés de gérer un conseil scolaire quand on est rendu fin septembre, qu'on doit commencer à penser au budget de l'année 1990 et que les conseillers n'ont pas encore adopté le budget 1989.

M. Villeneuve : Pouvez-vous nous donner une idée de ce que serait ou de ce qu'a été votre budget global, vos besoins financiers, l'année dernière ?

M. Roussy : Voici : notre budget 1989, c'est seulement un exercice de gymnastique. Il faut dire qu'on a dû prendre pour base les estimations préparées par les deux conseils qui administraient nos écoles jusqu'à la fin du mois d'août.

Alors, ils nous ont facturés pour les services rendus. Nous avons été obligés de faire confiance à leurs évaluations et de leur payer le montant qu'ils nous réclamaient. Ces éléments feront l'objet d'une vérification par nos propres vérificateurs, laquelle commencera dès le début d'octobre.

En plus de ça, nous avons dû mettre en place toute l'organisation du nouveau conseil qui entrerait en fonction. De nombreux postes, par exemple, n'ont été comblés que le 1^{er} septembre. Il faut également tenir compte de nos besoins administratifs. Tout ça a constitué une tâche très, très difficile. Nous sommes arrivés à un certain

montant ; nous avons soumis nos besoins au ministère, comme les autres conseils, vers la fin du mois de juin, ce qui était tout de même assez tôt, si l'on prend en considération tous les problèmes que nous avons dû résoudre, quand on sait que le 6 février, il n'y avait aucun employé permanent dans le conseil.

Il nous reste maintenant à résoudre le problème des montants ou des services dont nous avons hérité des conseils pour les huit premiers mois. Pendant ces huit premiers mois, nous avons été guidés par les structures des autres conseils auxquelles nous avons été obligés de faire confiance. Par contre, ça devient très difficile.

Le financement intérimaire qui nous a été promis par le gouvernement du jour était basé sur les coûts des quatre conseils de la région. En d'autres mots, le conseil était – Avec une formule assez complexe qui déterminait, pour les élèves qui venaient, par exemple, du conseil des écoles séparées d'Ottawa – Le coût par élève en 1988, et puis le coût que ça reflète en 1989, est basé là-dessus. L'ajustement devrait se faire dans nos calculs d'octrois légitimes, parce que, tout de même, les coûts d'octroi changent, etc. C'est à ce niveau-là qu'on est rendu et que se font les discussions présentement à Queen's Park.

M. Villeneuve : Prévoyez-vous une situation à peu près semblable dans les conseils homologues de la région, du côté dépenses par élève ?

M. Roussy : Cela ne serait pas juste de ma part de vous faire un commentaire à cet égard-là : les données des quatre conseils sont tout de même la propriété du ministère et non pas notre propriété à nous. Alors, les données avec lesquelles le ministère travaille présentement lui appartiennent. Alors, nous, on attend – On a une idée générale, mais ce n'est pas à nous d'exprimer une opinion à ce sujet-là.

M. Landriault : Moi, je pourrais vous en exprimer, une opinion. Les administrateurs n'osent parfois pas, mais les politiciens peuvent le faire. Je pense qu'on s'attend à avoir l'équivalence des dépenses moyennes des quatre conseils pour l'année courante.

M. Villeneuve : Grosso modo, avec une indication au même niveau du côté –

M. Landriault : Ayant dit ça, je n'exclus pas qu'il y ait quand même des fonds de démarrage que les quatre autres conseils n'ont pas eus parce qu'ils étaient déjà en place. Un ordinateur, ils en avaient un. Il y avait beaucoup de choses qui étaient déjà en place ; tandis que nous, il a fallu

évidemment créer à partir de rien. Cela s'est fait instantanément, comme on peut le voir ; instantanément, à l'intérieur d'un an, mais en très peu de temps pour monter une structure de cette ampleur-là.

M. Roussy : Vraiment, la mise sur pied du conseil de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton m'est venue –

Il m'est venu une comparaison lorsque je parlais au club Rotary, dans l'ouest de la ville : la création d'un conseil scolaire, c'est comme la construction d'une maison. D'abord, on achète un lot dans une section où il n'y a pas de services. Alors, on a eu la loi, qui est l'équivalent des égouts, de l'eau, si vous voulez, de l'électricité –

En deuxième lieu, il y a eu l'élection, qui était la fondation : les conseillers et conseillères sont la fondation des conseils scolaires. Ensuite, l'administration est arrivée ; c'est la charpente qu'on a montée. À l'intérieur de cette charpente, il y a un homme qui est marié à deux femmes de cultures différentes.

Alors, il y a un grand aménagement de structures administratives à mettre en place. Le financement, c'est un des malaises. C'est certainement un malaise qu'on va régler. Comme M. Landriault le dit, on s'attend à avoir le même montant par élève que les autres conseils de la région pour les élèves qu'ils desservent auparavant.

Ayant dit ça, on est très satisfait – Christophe Colomb est parti sans savoir où il allait aboutir ; il a quand même découvert quelque chose d'assez intéressant. Alors, on est dans des eaux qu'on ne connaît pas, mais je pense qu'on va éventuellement arriver à bon port.

Mme Ladouceur : Pourvu qu'on ait des bateaux pour flotter –

M. Landriault : Oui, il faudrait que le ministère nous aide à flotter un peu.

Mme la Présidente : Merci pour votre présentation à notre comité aujourd'hui.

That concludes our presentations for today. I suppose just before you leave that I should alert, if not warn, the committee members that Mr Mahoney will be chairing on Monday and Tuesday since I will be out of the province.

Mr Keyes : Can we vote on that?

The Chairman : He will surely keep you in line.

This is my last public appearance as chair, since we will be going in camera when I come back. I would just like to say thank you for your co-operation and your truly nonpartisan spirit. I

think it is a wonderful example of how well a committee can work. I very much enjoyed being your chair.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until 10 o'clock Monday morning.

The committee adjourned at 1608.

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Dobell, C. Jane, Former Chairman, Ottawa Board of Education

Thomas, Dr Alan, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto

Blake, Paul, Former Superintendent, Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board

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From the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Welland County**Roman Catholic Separate School Board:**

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Du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton—Section catholique:

Landriault, Rodrigue, président

Marcil, Pierre, directeur de l'éducation

Roussy, Félicien, trésorier

Ladouceur, Jocelyne T.



Committee
Publications

No. E-14

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Financement du système scolaire

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 2 October 1989



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 2 October 1989

The committee met at 1005 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

FINANCEMENT DU SYSTÈME SCOLAIRE (suite)

The Vice-Chairman: I see a quorum. Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to the select committee on education and I would like to call the meeting to order. Our first deputation is the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. Mr Gagne, we would like to welcome you and your group and would ask that you introduce the folks with you in your delegation. You have 30 minutes for your presentation, which hopefully will include time for questions by members.

ONTARIO SEPARATE SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

Mr Gagne: Our board of directors would like to thank you for receiving our association and listening to our submission on this very vital subject of education finance.

My name is Omer Gagne and I am the president of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, which in 1990 will be celebrating its 60th anniversary. I am a trustee on the Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On my right is Betty Moseley-Williams, first vice-president and a trustee on the Nipissing Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On her right is Dr Joe Fyfe, a member of the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education and a former president of our association. On my left is Dr Angelo Albanese, second vice-president and a trustee of the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On his left is Ernie Nyitrai, executive director of our association. Behind me at the back is Earle McCabe, the deputy executive director of our association.

At the outset, our board of directors wishes to commend your committee for studying this vital issue of education finance. Your recommendations will go a long way towards ensuring equality of educational opportunity for every one of the 1.8 million students in this province. Your deep concern for fairness to all underscores the

thesis contained in our brief. I do not intend to read our brief. However, at the end of these remarks, I will read the recommendations for the purpose of the record.

The Macdonald commission recognized the root cause of the shortcomings of the present system of financing education in Ontario. The commission concluded that the shortcomings were directly related to the uneven distribution of assessment wealth in Ontario, which makes a small number of school boards assessment-rich while the overwhelming majority of the 174 school boards are assessment-poor. These assessment-poor boards are left to educate their students on an assessment base per student, in some instances, that is less than 10 per cent of that of the rich boards.

We believe, and we hope you concur, that the present system of education finance is patently unfair, because it creates and maintains inequality of educational opportunity in Ontario. Why should one board be able to spend upwards of \$1,500 per student more than its coterminous board and do this with a mill rate less than that of its coterminous board? Why must students be denied the educational opportunity that wealth can bring, just because their parents choose to live in an area that is assessment-poor?

Geography must not dictate educational opportunity. Should not the students living in Kingston, Thunder Bay, Cornwall or Glencoe have the same educational opportunity as those students who live in Toronto and Ottawa? We firmly believe that every student in Ontario, regardless of geography, deserves equality of educational opportunity. They must all be treated equitably. Students who live in assessment-poor areas of the province must be allowed the same educational opportunities as those who live in assessment-rich areas. This is just, fair and socially acceptable.

On 18 May 1989, the Minister of Education announced a new government policy respecting education finance reform. The foundation of this announcement was, to quote the minister, "to ensure greater fairness and equity in the distribution of local and provincial education revenues between Ontario's public boards of education and Roman Catholic separate school boards."

1010

When implemented, this announcement will move all boards in the direction of full equity and ensure that each student will have the opportunity to enjoy a high quality of education regardless of where he or she lives. The Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association supports this policy announcement and asks this committee to use its considerable influence to ensure passage of the legislation implementing this policy before the 1 January 1990 effective date.

Although the main recommendation contained in our submission centres on the need to implement by 1 January 1990 the legislation permitting pooling of commercial and industrial assessment, we do have recommendations in our brief. These are found on pages 16 and 17 and I would like to take a few minutes to read them into the record. They are:

That the select committee review the time lines for full implementation of the school boards' access to commercial and industrial assessment with the objective of reducing implementation time to three years;

That the Ministry of Education introduce legislation establishing a single panel-single ceiling, commencing no later than 1 January 1990;

That the government of Ontario pass enabling legislation so that payments in lieu of taxes may be shared equitably among school boards and the municipality in a coterminous area;

That the government seriously consider announcing the increase to the base operating grant which will be contained in the general legislative grants by 31 December of the previous year for the following year, and that the increase in the GLGs for the following year be equal to at least the annual rate of inflation in Ontario in December of the previous year;

That if the government must mandate school boards to undertake certain programs, the amount allocated for these programs be added to the ceilings of the schools boards and be distributed back to the school boards at their individual grant rate;

That the Ministry of Education allow these growing boards which have a significant capital allocation debenture debt to phase in the total effect of this debt over the same period as those boards are able to access commercial and industrial assessment;

That with the exception of the seven per cent holdback, pending the receipt by the government of the board's annual audited statements, the

remaining 93 per cent of the grants be distributed to the school boards in 12 equal instalments;

That the government make grants available for all open-access students, including those affected by high cost factors, and

That the Municipal Act be amended to require municipalities to remit the school tax to the school boards as soon as it is collected.

Thank you for listening to our concerns. My colleagues and I are ready to answer your questions.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We have three questioners. Mr Johnston is first.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the report. It is clearly laid out and I was able to read along as you were giving your summary of its contents. There are a couple of things I want to ask you about. The first is to do with the rolling of the trainable retarded-special education funds into the general legislative grants this year. We have had a number of people come before us lamenting that, and you have come forward praising it. Those lamenting it basically are lamenting it on the basis of accountability questions, really, wondering what is going to take place in terms of being able to track how the various boards are actually spending their special ed bucks or their money for the trainable retarded.

The second point is that a selection of boards in both panels, as I understand it, in both systems are adversely affected by this because of the nature of their own communities, which have a large number of services for people in the exceptional categories, so there is a greater gravitation of people there.

For instance, in Kingston, we learned about a \$194,000 budget shortfall as a result of this rolling-in. I was interested to see that you have taken the universality position, if I can put it that way, instead. I would like to hear you respond to some of those concerns we had raised with us.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We were encouraged and we were pleased to see the funding rolled into the GLGs mainly because we hope that is going to attach a cost to it. So we support that. We think that when a program is initiated, the funding should be tied into the GLGs. That is not to say that we found the money was adequate that was put in this year.

I am from one of the boards that found the amount of money for our special education classes was not sufficient. We did not cut total programs, but we certainly think that the level of service we are able to provide was damaged. Some of the children who have very special

needs in our part of the province, the trainable retarded, the mentally and physically handicapped—we do a great deal of integration and we were pleased to see the funding come with the GLGs, but we think it is not adequate and there has to be a way to make that money more adequate.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested if at some point you can share with us, as an association of boards, any ideas you have in terms of making the reporting on special ed any more systematic and understandable than it is at the present time. We have now gone through—at least, I have had a chance and I know each of the caucuses has the information from the various boards that has been accumulated by the province, and basically it does not tell us anything that I can use in an appropriate way to determine whether or not special education is being interpreted in a similar fashion across the province, whether the money is being spent wisely in all cases.

I am concerned that without that kind of mechanism before we go to the GLG approach, we are not even going to have that kind of statistical base to be able to determine where we should be going in the future on those issues.

Mr Gagne: Our executive director will speak on that because we intend to do that.

Mr Nyitrai: I am just going to pick that up and indicate, if I may, Mr Johnston, that we will undertake that ourselves for the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is great. I appreciate that. There are two other matters, if I have time. Just cut me off if I do not—

The Vice-Chairman: Okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —but I know I do, so I will just continue, because they gave such a short presentation.

The quickest one is the deficits that are now accruing or are likely to accrue on debentures you raise and the idea of giving some forgiveness there in terms of how boards can deal with that. A number of your boards, as many as 25 we have heard, also have operating deficit problems in the province and have had real difficulty.

I remember the Sarnia board, the Lambton area board, coming before us and talking specifically about their problems. If you have not taken a position on the rigidity we presently have in the system about operating debt, which has caused enormous cuts in programs and staffing in some boards in the province, I wonder if you can tell us whether or not, as we move to completion, finally, of funding, etc, there should be some

leeway and some forgiveness placed in that process as well.

Mr Gagne: I guess you heard our particular board in another committee sitting. Last year alone, starting in the fall of this year, we had to terminate 40 teachers, mainly through attrition. We have had to cut programs in order to meet our deficit because the funding is just not adequate. We are certainly, as you can go back to see, one of the three lowest spending boards in Ontario. We are not throwing our money away, but we are cutting programs in order to meet—we should not have to cut programs, but you have to because of the funding that is on now. For our particular one, to meet our deficit we have cut our music program and our industrial arts because of the funding.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: My final question is largely a philosophical question, because although I agree with you that Macdonald pointed to the discrepancy in terms of assessment, he also talked about the whole problem of the property tax being a base for education. I want to roll my two-part question into one.

Although you recognize that he was not necessarily talking there about just discrepancy between the Catholic system and the public system, but between low assessment areas and other assessment areas, the province's solution at this point, which you are asking to be accelerated to three years, does not touch on the fact that we are now going to have coterminous poverty and coterminous richness, if I can put it that way. You have not addressed, either, the recommendation he made about the income tax change around the funding of education. I wonder if you could explain to me why you are so happy with the way the province is going. I presume it is the bird in the hand in comparison with the bird in the bush that you want.

Mr Gagne: I will let one of the authors, Dr Fyfe, answer that.

Dr Fyfe: I think it has been well documented in both the Blair and the Macdonald commission reports the deficiencies associated with income tax collection for educational purposes as well as the strong points of the property tax for educational purposes. Both stated that the property tax was regressive, particularly for low-income people, and each report suggested that to counter this there be relief for low-income people.

The Blair commission recommended that this be via some of the things that are in place at the

present time, the property tax credit and things like that. The Macdonald commission voted to retain property tax, but at the same time suggested that income tax of 1.4 points be added to give a property tax rebate to the low-income-tax people. Each commission retained the strength of the property tax situation for educational purpose, but at the same time advised more help for the low-income people.

I feel that probably we were unanimous in that. Both commissions felt that was the route to go, that there were too many deficiencies if you eliminated property tax; as an example, out-of-country property owners.

Second, the vacuum created by vacating the property education tax would be quickly picked up by others. Over my years in education, I have seen that where wholesale changes occurred in assessment, it did not take long for the appropriate bodies to pick up that assessment vacancy, so the owners, the people who were paying the taxes, did not benefit really from the change of assessment to any great extent when there was a radical change in the base for assessment.

It is felt that property tax as the basis for the educational tax was a good base. Then if you added or modified it for the low-income people, you probably would have the best of both worlds. It can be done by income tax. It can be done by property tax rebates. A variety of suggestions have been suggested.

Mr Keyes: I am glad Mr Johnston asked one of my questions on the income tax to see whether there was support for that or not, because that has been a common theme. We have been trying to see whether boards have really looked at alternatives away from property tax.

Let's go back for a moment to the one on the ceiling. When you had your second recommendation, which talked about establishing the ceiling, I presume the unwritten part in there is a ceiling for, in quotes, approved costs. But I am wondering whether you feel there is any merit: Should the province have, in quotes, a ceiling for expenditures as used to happen years ago, where you had a mixture of approved expenditures and extraordinary expenditures? Then to flesh that out, it boils down to what your opinion is as to whether the province should try to establish some type of commission to actually cost out education so that, once costed, you then would have a reasonable basis on which to set the approved ceilings per pupil.

Mr Gagne: I think you, and I am sure the ministry, will find that the main part, the single panel, is an accounting procedure that probably

should have been done years ago and would certainly help out. For 1990, it will be a double ceiling, for the elementary and the secondary. There is talk of having it a single ceiling. They are certainly going to have to have an increase in the ceiling between the elementary and the secondary if they have a single ceiling. Naturally, as you can see in all our things, the elementary ceiling is too low now. Probably, a committee will be set up to come up with a reasonable ceiling between the elementary and the secondary.

Mr Keyes: Just looking at increasing, as an example, which has been recommended, the elementary ceiling would be more in line with the secondary, while at the same time not getting rid of it in one year. What about trying to determine those very ceilings? At no time, in my opinion, have we really had an opportunity to cost education to determine what is an appropriate ceiling. Have you looked at all at that side?

Dr Fyfe: At the present time there are boards in the province that have the ceiling broken down into its various components and computerized. If you check with the former finance officer of the Metropolitan Toronto area, I guess it was Sam MacKinlay, he has it all broken down. There is a map set up so that you could ask him, "A grade 2 in such-and-such area: What is the cost of running English in that area?" It is all broken down and available if you want to avail yourselves of it. That would be one way of finding out what went into the map that comprised the costs for every subject that is taught in that particular board. All you have to do is push a button on the computer and the costs are there.

Then you have to decide, is it appropriate or not, English versus mathematics versus social sciences versus the biology group? The information is available. The question becomes: Do you want to change his particular pattern for costing it to your particular pattern of costing it? Is the pattern that he is using appropriate? Should it be changed? Do you feel that there should be more accent on computer science, or should there be more accent on this? If you go to Cochrane, should you put more accent on social sciences? If you go to Toronto, should you put more accent on languages?

It depends on what your feeling is, and each one around the table and each one of us has a different opinion as to what should be accentuated in the way of different programs in the school system. If you remember, Macdonald said that eventually it should be a program-oriented

ceiling. Depending on the programs you put into your school, and it would vary from school to school, then you would have your costs available, and each board in the province would have a program-determined cost ceiling. The ceiling might vary from board to board depending, as it does now, on the program it is offering.

Mr Keyes: I was going to say, it would have to be that when you want to make a comparison of English in grade 2, whether it is in Metropolitan Toronto, Matheson or Kingston. Even though you have a program basis, you will have a phenomenal discrepancy between them.

Dr Fyfe: Yes, but English is the same, no matter which area of the province you go to. It is still the same language that is spoken. If we talk about French, the same thing would apply. French in the different areas of the province might vary according to the accent that you want to put on it, no pun intended, and therefore it would vary across the whole of the province.

But in the long run I think you will find, once the playing field is level and everybody is operating on the same level playing field, that then you can bring in your programs to determine what each board wants in its particular area.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. We have a few minutes.

Mr Keyes: It is difficult to deal with that accent in the Ottawa Valley, but we have another questioner. I was going to ask the one—but I will just leave it with him and maybe he will work it into his answer—on the basis of the payments in lieu. I think of the city of Kingston, which is the highest nontax-revenue-producing per assessment basis, or per capita basis, anywhere in Ontario, because it is an institutional town. They count on the payments in lieu from the federal government as well as the provincial government, which are much less than the federal, about 50 per cent.

Outside the growing areas of the township is where all the commercial-industrial assessment is. I was just wondering, perhaps, if you would be able to get—or some time after this I will find out more on your view of the validity of asking the payment-in-lieu community to be able to share it totally. It is there, and I know the chairman is not going to give us time to answer that one until we get to the next one.

The Vice-Chairman: It is not fair to throw a question at them and not give them time to respond, Mr Keyes. So if you have a comment on that, very briefly—

Mr Gagne: We have a comment on it.

1030

Mrs Moseley-Williams: You know that this was discussed at some length in the Macdonald commission and the recommendation was made there that payment in lieu of taxes should be shared within the school board and the municipality. Of course, we support that recommendation. We would see the payment in lieu being split or divided with respect to the tax bill the way it is: how much goes to the municipality and what goes to the education taxes. The education taxes would go to the boards on the basis of their percentage of the residential and farm assessment.

Mr Keyes: Similar to what we are doing with the business commercial-industrial proposal.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Yes.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. Mr Kozyra, briefly.

Mr Kozyra: Mr Gagne, we heard from a good number of Toronto-based school boards and associations and they had their own version of inequity in funding. Basically it questioned the validity of using cost per pupil as an accurate measuring stick, because their contention was that although they were spending considerably more, for reasons such as the great influx of new Canadians, a great influx of new programs for special needs and the costs for teachers' salaries, their costs were running considerably higher and that the end result, call it the student educational milieu and experience, was no richer than assessment-poor and cost-per-pupil-ratio-lower boards. I wonder if you would respond to that?

Mr Gagne: I think certainly there are higher costs than there would be here but somewhere we have to get an equalized cost in the province. We should be able to offer the same programs to all the students in Ontario.

Dr Fyfe: Also in response to that, there are weighting factors built into the present system that attempt to look after the particular problem you relate with regard to the boards in this area because of the new Canadians. I think it is a matter of first increasing the weighting factors if so indicated. If the Ministry of Education finds their costs are higher than Sudbury, as an example, in this particular field, then their weighting factor should compensate for that.

Also, perhaps things can be built into the ceiling the same as the special education grant where the grants are paid on the basis of local assessment wealth. That is, they come out at the board's rate of grant so that, once again, you

have an evening factor across the province for different programs.

Mr Kozyra: So your contention is that despite the present weighting factors and so on, the inequity of costs per pupil still exists?

Dr Fyfe: Oh, yes. It is still there.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation this morning. We do appreciate the brief. It is very helpful and thanks for coming.

Our next presenters are the Completion Office Separate Schools; Thomas Reilly, executive director. If we could have them come forward? Mr Reilly, your name appears first on the list, so I am treating you as the leadoff hitter, if you could introduce your group. You also have 30 minutes for your presentation, to include question period.

COMPLETION OFFICE SEPARATE SCHOOLS

Mr Reilly: I am accompanied this morning by Eileen Lennon, the provincial president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and Patrick Smith, the provincial president of the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations in the province.

The Completion Office Separate Schools performs a co-ordinating function for the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, the Ontario Separate School Business Officials' Association, the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association.

I do not intend to read this brief but I would like to give some highlights of it. The committee has asked that we address adequacy, equity and accountability. We will attempt to do just that. I will begin with a summary of the points we will make and then get into more depth in some of them.

The expectations for education in Ontario at the moment are extremely high and very varied. As the result of a combination of provincial government initiatives and response to local expectations, boards have become responsible for a very wide range of programs and services. The means being provided to meet the demands are not adequate. However, the demand itself may be higher than it need be.

The means which are available in the province for the delivery of educational programs and services are not equitably distributed, with the result that equal educational opportunity is nonexistent. Many boards feel they are held

formally and informally accountable for a range of services which they cannot control and do not have the means to deliver. This undermines the concept of accountability.

Although official expectations have not been well defined and the methods of measuring progress are in a developmental stage, the system has been reasonably accountable, in our opinion, for its stewardship.

Finally, the recent announcements by the government of changes in educational finance represent progress towards the resolution of some of the problems outlined and, we feel, should be supported.

To elaborate on some of those points:

At the present time, school boards feel themselves caught in a cycle of spiralling expectations for additional service and stagnating resources to meet those expectations, a widening commitment-capability gap.

At the local level, trustees are legitimately answerable to their local constituents and they pay close attention to their demands. That has led to higher and higher expectations in provision of services, such as transportation, administration and other support services.

At the provincial level, the province is bringing forward what seems at times an endless list of new expectations for boards—reduction in class size, an AIDS program, a drug education program and health and safety legislation—all legitimate but all costly. The demand side in education, we would submit, is virtually out of control and the lack of co-ordination between demand on the one hand and the provision of revenue on the other makes educators and trustees uncomfortable with the concept of accountability.

Accountability can only exist truly in a carefully defined context in which all the parties involved are clear about who the players are, what the expectations are and who is responsible for meeting them. We would submit that those conditions do not exist in Ontario at the moment. However, considerable strides have been made in ensuring that the education system is accountable—the work of this committee, for example. All of the reports have caused educators to focus on their fundamental beliefs and answer publicly for their past record, their present actions and their future plans.

There is a paradox here: the higher the demand for accountability, the greater the struggle to provide means of doing so. Reasonably promising schemes, such as co-ordination of the OAC exams, provincial reviews and the Ontario

assessment instrument pool, are brought forward to meet this need. All of those in themselves are very costly programs and illustrate the continual cycle in which we are caught.

As a society, then, we feel we are only beginning to come to grips with the need to focus more clearly on what we can realistically expect education to do with the resources available or, conversely, to decide what exactly it is we want done and then provide the resources to make its attainment a realistic possibility. We would see a watershed coming in Ontario education where big decisions have to be made about what is realistic and what the province can afford.

Educators, for example, pressure the government to provide 60 per cent of operating expenditures. If that is 60 per cent of whatever anybody chooses to spend, then I do not think any elected body could ever give such a commitment. The government claims that it is much closer than it is given credit for to 60 per cent of approved expenditures. We need to decide what is realistic.

Our position on adequacy is that adequacy in educational funding has to be tackled at both ends, to look carefully at what we want and the system can do and what we can afford. The mandate of this committee is very significant in that regard.

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Our position on equity is clear: It does not currently exist. Equity relates to the opportunity provided to the individual student enrolled in the publicly funded schools of the province for equal educational opportunity. Ontario has espoused that philosophy but at the present moment, it is not in effect. We also feel the trend is getting worse. I will not delve into statistics in this, because you have been deluged with them and the case, I think, is pretty clear. However, when boards are forced to go over the ceiling, the strain on an assessment-poor board to provide even comparable levels of service to those provided by an assessment-rich board is obvious. The idea of equal local effort for the same level of service simply disappears.

A combination of the maldistribution of commercial assessment, unrealistic ceilings, lowering of provincial support for capital projects and the channelling of resources to specific initiatives have all in recent years put great pressure on assessment-poor boards to be able to finance even basic levels of service when compared with what can be provided by the assessment-rich. The situation has made a mockery of equal educational opportunity, has

rendered discussions about adequacy meaningless and has created great scepticism about accountability among many boards in the province.

As part of the budget announcements, the government has indicated that it will make changes in educational financing arrangements. We take it that the goals are to give most boards in the province an increase in revenue and let no boards lose revenue. Ceilings and the government's share within the ceilings will be raised by at least \$180 million over the next six years, which is probably too long a time, but that is the way it looks. Undesignated commercial assessment will be shared between coterminous boards and grants will consequently, because of all of those, flow out to the poorer areas of the province.

COSS regards these proposals positively and would request that this committee support them, at the very least in principle, for these reasons: As we see it, the raising of the ceilings would allow more boards, perhaps most boards, to come within ceiling and there will be an opportunity for the province and boards to co-operate in deciding on reasonable levels of service. We think that should be done systematically and we propose some body to do that in an ongoing way.

Grant money should flow out to those areas of the province that are poor in commercial wealth. That would be simple justice. If the ceilings are maintained at adequate levels, all boards will be well served because there will be de facto provincial sharing of grants and assessments. The net result of those two changes would be to increase local autonomy.

The announced changes bring with them great promise for a new beginning, an opportunity for partnership. The changes are the best at the present moment that we see possible, with the political climate as it is, and also within the existing property tax framework. The situation has not yet reached critical enough proportions that people would be motivated to change that framework, so we accept it as a given.

The separate school position has been clear for a long time, that there should be provincial pooling of resources and the resources should be allocated on a per-pupil basis because pupils are supposed to be the focus of the system. However, the changes proposed really should be given a fair opportunity to work. They are rational, they meet many of the needs and only time will tell if they are adequate.

Separate school associations represented by COSS are certainly willing to participate fully in

any provincial effort to build a partnership in education. Like everybody else, we are truly grateful for the opportunity to put forth our point of view and for your patience in listening to the same points put so repeatedly. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Not at all, Mr Reilly. Thank you very much.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Besides, it is always a pleasure to hear from you, Tom. Seeing you in the background all the time and not before us has been very strange. I feel much more comfortable that you are back actually at the table again.

The Vice-Chairman: We know why you're here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. He always makes us nervous.

I want to deal with two things. One is the jigsaw funding, which I think you have actually laid out pretty well in terms of the areas of focus if we are going to have real equity and the adequacy questions met.

I want to focus in a little bit at the moment on the ceilings question rather than on some of the other matters, because you are the first group I know of that has actually talked about something I have been trying to raise, which is some new process for establishing ceilings and some sort of co-operation between the various players. In your report you mentioned some of the players that should be on this—teachers' associations, trustee associations and parents.

I wonder if you have thought about this any more fully than that. That is about as far I have gone, frankly, as well, in terms of what the process would be. Obviously, the end responsibility would be with the minister to make a determination, but I guess there are two sides. One, would you give me an idea of how you would see these people working together; and are there any subtleties as to who should be involved that would be necessary to reflect the differences in program needs that were just mentioned by the last group that was here? Are there any further thoughts on elaborating that out a little bit?

Mr Reilly: Interestingly enough, I think the ministry has a mechanism in place for curriculum: curriculum review development and implementation. It is supposed to be a cyclic review; boards are to put it in place, and anything you are putting into your curriculum goes through this process. It has to be vetted, examined by various groups within a board, implemented and then reviewed, and that cycles continues.

Something similar to that, I think, could work if a group in the province came up with a bright

idea for implementing a new program. Let's take the drug or AIDS program for grades 1 and 2; it would seem to me it should go through a process like that with the players. You have to have teachers involved because it will affect them, trustees because they have to govern it, administrators because they will implement it, and the ministry personnel because ultimately they control it and provide the money. I think all of those people should have some say in it, and we would not constantly be caught with surprises.

It could be slow. If you take AIDS, that is a crisis, but any kind of provision we put in place can always have a provision within it for dealing with a crisis; that is not a difficult thing to build in. It would seem to me that kind of discipline is needed to bring what is going into education into some kind of focus.

It could also deal with new initiatives outside of education such as the payroll tax by examining rationally what will be the impact of that on boards and if it would be reasonable to try and build it into a ceiling. At the present moment boards, I think, are naturally taking up a bargaining position. To give you an exaggerated impact of that, the government tends to say, "Well, it won't be that bad." It is a negotiating position. Why not get that out and make it rational? It is not easy, but that is the kind of process I would say is needed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the existing programs and weighting factors? Surely at the moment, if you look at the ceiling columns, the discrepancy between what boards are thinking and the costs of providing those programs long established is much more a problem of being over ceiling than is the recent AIDS programs, etc. We would have to set up a mechanism of going back and reviewing those, I guess.

Mr Reilly: I think part of the whole process would be some kind of review of what is already in place. Just to pick something out of the blue, many people now question things like industrial arts or family studies in the grades 7 and 8 level. That was very important. When I was younger, you had to know how to use a chisel or a handsaw or something. Not that I am saying they are still back at that stage, but more and more we are getting into a society where you could question the relevance of programs like that and examine them. If they are relevant, excellent. If they are not, some things may need to go. You would have to have a period of time when that whole thing came into place and you reviewed what already exists as well as examining what is proposed.

1050

Mr R. F. Johnston: The final question I have is around accountability and the notion of a comprehensive audit system. We have had a number of people come before us regarding various aspects of financial accountability between the boards and the ministry. Frankly, some people have been saying that we really need to start looking at the value of the dollar being spent in terms of both the development of bureaucracy and the quality of the programs that are being delivered for the money. There does not seem to be that kind of audit mechanism in a systematic way yet within the education system, and I wonder if you had any comments about that.

Mr Reilly: You keep raising special education, for example, and the amount of money made available. More important than the amount of money made available is monitoring to see that the money is used for the purpose it is made available for. There is a philosophical difference, I think, there.

Basically, the system of financing at the moment is based on trust at the local level, with the assumption that local democracy will take after the program provided. Ontario takes a political view of how that will be controlled. It is up to the special education people at the local level to get out and lobby their trustees and make sure they are getting the programs they deserve.

A much more rational model would be a model of comprehensive audit, tracking specific grants such as they have in the United States, chapter 5, chapter 7 and so on, for specific purposes. It is very costly to administer. I think you would be into spending money to monitor money and you might end up spending more money monitoring it than you are spending on the program, as against trusting a local political system in which only 20 per cent of the people go out to vote.

That is why I say, and maybe it is a personal opinion, I think a big watershed is coming in educational finance in Ontario. Some boards can keep upping the ante, but many boards cannot; and in my humble view, the government cannot keep bringing those boards up to the maximum. Unless somehow we go clearly philosophically one way or the other and say to some boards, "Tough; you live in that part of the province, so you will be poor" or we have a rational system for controlling all of this, then I would think we will go from crisis to crisis.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Reilly, I guess we are 50-50 on this presentation. I was very happy that you understood what the 60 per cent is all about, and I

am very happy to see somebody in the position that you are in saying that publicly.

I also felt that you had a really deep perception of the political problems or challenges that are there when we are talking about pooling or sharing of the commercial-industrial assessment. Also, it is very hopeful for me that a person in your position would have that perception.

I guess the other two things I take exception to are much smaller. I certainly do not like the untruth—that is what I consider it; I am sorry I have to use a word I do not use very often—when you refer to a "lowering of the capital for this province." I thought you said that. I listened very carefully. We have increased it, as you know.

Mr Reilly: If I did, I take that back. No, it has increased very substantially, and the board I was associated with has benefited very substantially from that increase.

Mrs O'Neill: Correct.

Mr Reilly: I was addressing the business of the lowering of the provincial share of individual projects from 75 per cent to 60 per cent.

Mrs O'Neill: Sorry. I misunderstood. Okay?

Mr Reilly: Okay. That does put a larger part on the local mill rate, particularly for those boards that will not draw in substantial money from development charges.

Mrs O'Neill: I did not think you would think that.

Mr Reilly: No. I would never say such a thing.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay.

The Vice-Chairman: That should be clarified, though, and I think it is a good point, if I could just interject. In the actual brief on page 11, under "Position of Equity," it does say: "A combination of the maldistribution of commercial assessment and unrealistic ceilings, lowering of provincial support for capital...." It is right in the brief.

Mr Reilly: Okay. Support for capital projects; we have clarified it.

Mrs O'Neill: The other thing is that I think you know I was involved in trying to get better accommodation for capital for schools on many committees before I came to this place officially. I think the other thing we have done is long-term planning access, which has not been possible.

The other thing is smaller; it is your "closer to my heart" perception about industrial arts and chisels. I feel very strongly that family studies and industrial arts in many parts of this province, if not all, have kept up with the new technologies and new needs of people. I still think those two

subject areas, if dealt with by well-qualified teachers and, may I suggest, supervised by good superintendents, prepare people for life. I will always be coming to their defence. I hope there will never be a decision, certainly not by separate school boards and I hope not by any school board, that those subjects will be eliminated or not given at least in an optional or voluntary way. However—

Mr Reilly: If I could respond to that, I was choosing an example. I do not think they should be eliminated, but I am saying they should be examined, as every other program should be examined, because we have some accretions that are there because they have always been there. I think we need to look at all of that. Otherwise, the costs just go up and up and up.

Mrs O'Neill: I agree with that; it is a very high-cost program.

You have in your thesis: "As things stand at the moment, the means being provided to meet the demands are not adequate. However, the demand may be higher than it need be." I think you said a few things about that in your remarks to Mr Johnston. Did you want to say anything more about that? I think you are the people on the front line who will have to carry that message first. If we carry it, you will have to be the ones who will carry it more closely. Could you give us a little bit more of an idea specifically on that point?

Ms Lennon: I would like to take that, I suppose, as the spokesperson for the people who are on the front line. The people sitting in the classrooms out there really feel besieged that every September or every year there is something new you have to teach in a curriculum that is already very crowded, and nobody says, "Take something away," or "Cut back on this." Then there is a continual scream about returning to the basics.

It is very difficult to put that all together in a five-and-a-half-hour day or five-hour day when you sit down to do your timetable. When I sat down to do my timetable 17 years ago when I started to teach, a lot of things were not there that are there now, but I am not expected to teach anything less. There is nothing I have been able to stop teaching and say, "This will be handled somewhere else."

Every time there is a new problem in society, schools get blamed: "This would not have happened if there was better education; so the schools have to take it up." That is not said from the point of view that we do not think schools do not have a role to play, but we cannot be the panacea for all of society's ills and problems, and

we cannot be expected to be able to provide all the answers.

It is very difficult to say, "Won't you get into this?" What would you take away? Within any educational field and any group of teachers you would get a varying number of opinions about what it is you would take away.

Certainly as a society we have to start looking at what we expect our schools to be able to do, because right now it has gotten to the stage where we are expected to do and be all things to all people. Then you are always left feeling a certain sense of frustration and failure. It is not good for the morale out there.

The Vice-Chairman: That sounds familiar.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman, I was hoping we would get more specific examples, but maybe Eileen can give them to me at another time.

I do want to congratulate you on the work you are doing. I think you are pioneers, and I am happy with the tone in which your presentation was made.

1100

Mr Jackson: Having gone through the brief very briefly, I saw scant reference to capital, other than the points which have now been clarified, and I thought that was rather unusual. Tom, I know you presented while Bill 20 hearings were on, and I raised several questions around pent-up Bill 30 demand versus natural-growth demand versus pre-Bill 30 pent-up demand. There are three sorts of categories of pressure for capital in the system. It strikes me that your arguments of equity and access should have given this committee a little more guidance with respect to capital.

Let me ask you in a general sense why you did not deal with the pent-up Bill 30 demand, which does not seem to be addressed in any long-term planning of the government. When I say that, just for purposes of the record, there has been an increase in capital, but it does not meet the increase in enrolment that was generated through Bill 30 or the necessity to bring both systems on an equal footing in terms of access to new construction. Then we were told that Bill 20, the Development Charges Act amendments, would deal with future growth, which has nothing to do with two systems but has everything to do with new home construction and the pressures of growth in an area that is growing. It is the gap in between that no one seems to know how we are ever going to address. It strikes me that the Completion Office should have a lot of opinions about that, and I did not see it. Is there a reason why we are not being more focused in that area?

Do you know something about Bill 20 and how it will be creatively managed by the government that we do not know about?

Mr Reilly: No. I do not know anything that you do not know, Mr Jackson.

Mr Jackson: I would not say that. You got invited to a meeting three weeks ago that we were not invited to. There are a few things you know.

Mr Reilly: Actually, I did not get invited to that meeting.

In terms of capital, it would seem to me that in recent years an effort has been made to put more money into capital expenditures and therefore address the gap between the need and the fulfilment of that need. I do not think any real priority can or should be given to any source of the creation of that need. School boards have needs. I think their first need, just out of necessity, is new pupil places. You cannot leave children out in the open. Within that context, the needs put forward by different boards are addressed by the regional offices of the ministry. As far as our perception is concerned, they have very fairly prioritized those and sent them into the Mowat Block, where again they have been prioritized and the resources available have been equitably distributed.

I do not think we can come in saying on the one hand that we want an equitable distribution of other resources for operating expenses but on the other hand that we want a high priority in capital just because of Bill 30. I think things have been done fairly. That is really all that we can ask.

Mr Jackson: But on that point, the capital distributions of the last two and a half years have not been done on a purely equitable basis. They have been done on the basis of the very point you have indicated, which is that there was a greater demand based on the significant legislative change of Bill 30.

We now move into Bill 20, the Development Charges Act, and the rules of the game are that it shall be done equitably, and "equitably" is defined as the percentage of enrolment base, which is separate versus public, and it will dictate the opportunities for the two boards to draw from the fund in the same proportion that they have children in the system collectively. Quite frankly, that is a variation from what the experience has been in the previous three years.

The public boards would certainly be here, and two groups for public education will be before us today, to indicate that the capital experience in this province in the last three years has been heavily favoured towards the separate system. We are not arguing the history of that; we are here

to observe it, phrase it and understand it and then look at where we go from here. That is why I wanted to get some additional comments.

If you are now saying that on the basis that this pent-up demand has all been addressed, and as the Completion Office, with your mandate, which is Bill 30 and its basis, if you are prepared to move from the one position to the other, I just wanted to get a better sense from you, because this committee can be silent on it. I sense that some groups do not want us to be silent on it; they would like to know what the government's priorities will be for the expenditure of limited dollars, albeit more dollars than we have known in the past but still fewer dollars than are need to meet the demand.

The Vice-Chairman: Perhaps we could have a wrapup comment, because I think we are bordering on leading the witness and getting into discussions. This is question period.

Mr Reilly: My response would still be that it should be done on the business of equity as it stands at the moment. You look at the need. If you take two coterminous boards—and I know two—where one board has 2,000 secondary students without a building and one has 1,000 secondary students without a building, the one with 2,000 students gets two schools and the other gets one school. I think the ministry has been attempting to do that. The reason for having 2,000 may well relate to Bill 30, but the fact of the moment is the students are there and that is the criterion on which it should be done.

Can I have just 30 seconds to go back to Yvonne's question about how things get out of whack? In an anecdote I read recently, a reporter in New York City—and I will be quick—phoned up the New York public board and asked them how many administrators they had at their downtown offices. They were very reluctant to tell him but eventually he found out the number was 6,000, one for every 157 students in the system. Just out of a notion, he phoned the archdiocese—and it is all private there of course—and he said, "How many people do you have running your school system?" The fellow said, "I do not know, but I will count them." So he counted and came back on the phone and said 32, one for every 4,500 students in the system. The reality is somewhere in between, and that is what happens, I think, provincially.

The Vice-Chairman: I thank you and your group from the Completion Office very much for your presentation. It has been very helpful, and some very honest and frank answers to our questions. Thank you for coming this morning.

Our next presenters are from the Carleton Board of Education. If they are out in the hallway, maybe we could send a messenger.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Could I ask a question on a point of order while we are waiting? Do we have any idea yet when we are going to receive updated information from the ministry on a number of the things we have been asking for, because we do start, in theory, writing on Wednesday, and it would be a shame if we get them on Wednesday. If we could get them today or tomorrow, it would be useful.

The Vice-Chairman: Mr Brumer, did you hear the question?

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is a lot of outstanding information that we have been requesting over the last little while and I was wondering when we might be getting some of that, because we start committee writing, of course, on Wednesday and it would be good to have some of it before that so we can digest some of it before we start trying to write recommendations.

Mr Brumer: We have most of the material put together, and Ron felt that when he comes tomorrow, he will hand it out and answer questions pertaining to it, rather than just sending it in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: All right. As long as we have it by tomorrow, that is fine with me.

Mr Brumer: You have no objection to that?

Mr R. F. Johnston: No. Tomorrow is fine.

The Vice-Chairman: We will go back to our presenters. We have the chairman of the Carleton board, Derek Walter. Perhaps for purposes of Hansard, you could introduce yourself and your colleague. You have 30 minutes for your presentation, which hopefully will include some time for questions from the members. Begin whenever you are ready.

CARLETON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Walter: My name is Derek Walter. I am with the Carleton board. I have with me this morning Lyle MacLennan, our director of education.

Since I am sure you are all growing tired of listening to all the rhetoric that is floating around here—and I get tired of hearing it as well—I am going to be very brief in our presentation. We have supplied a number of copies of our presentation to you, so I will highlight the brief itself and expect I will get a lot of questions, because I think that is really where we can give you some solutions to some of your problems. I

say you have problems because you certainly do in the sense of funding for education in Ontario.

I think I would like to point out some fundamentals, which you will find on the front page. Basically, we feel public education is a fundamental cornerstone of the democratic society. Secondly, public education must be equally accessible to all citizens regardless of their social, economic, religious or ethnic backgrounds. Public education is more than simply training for the marketplace, although basic skills are a vital component. Public education must be a high priority and be funded at both the local and provincial levels.

We are also concerned that there are tremendous global changes in society which are affecting the demands on educators, to ensure our service is relevant. In the light of that, we would like to see funding by the province on public education put into a stable and predictable format and reflect the priorities and expectations of the provincial government as our senior partner in this business of education.

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We are concerned by a number of things that we concern ourselves with on a daily basis, which we summarize as three items so it is simple: consultation, planning and resources. We are concerned about consultation about the goals and directions of public education or any significant redirection or revisions to our mandate; planning, so we know where we are going with some reasonable expectation of success; and resources to get the job done, which includes financial, facilities, information, programs and people.

The consultation process has been sadly lacking in the last few years, particularly in the light of even the most recent throne speech, which we will get into later. However, we are asking that the committee review that before any major policy changes are announced by the provincial government affecting the quality and delivery of public education programs and services, opportunities must be provided for full, honest and open dialogue among all affected parties, including the local boards, parents, teachers, business, industry, universities, community colleges and other places of higher learning.

If I may just stop here for a moment and reflect on the fact that we had the honourable minister at our board on Friday. It was a pleasant and nice change to get some honest and direct rhetoric. Even though we did not quite approve of

everything he was saying, at least he shot from the hip and we know where we are going.

Changes in public education policy, once decided upon by the government of the day, must be clearly explained to the school systems and the general public, including the expected outcome and the real financial impact to both the province and the local level. This is one area where the Carleton board particularly has been hurt badly in the financial area, by not knowing what the provincial government is expecting of us or announcing situations on which we had no prior consultation. Next thing we know, we have to reflect that increase in the local levy.

We would like to see approved changes in public education policy adequately supported by the provision of appropriate resources, be it financial, facilities or training for the personnel who will deliver them.

On the prospect of planning, I have summarized with one brief paragraph that the government must show leadership in understanding the impact of new directions on the total system, in phasing changes at a rate of change which local school systems and schools can absorb, and in helping local boards manage the process of change in an orderly and effective manner. Again, this is critical to us as a board because all too often the mandate is sent to us sometimes not even through the appropriate channels. We learn of many things through the media, which I think is very inappropriate. We would like to see this particular group review that process and come forward with some better ideas.

On the prospect of finances, it is rather critical. We are not going to sit here and complain to you all day long about finances. I am sure you have heard that from every other board that came here. However, not to be put in the same light as the Carleton board, I personally have been a trustee for eight years, as one of the members here will attest, and I have seen our grant from the province drop from 57 per cent to approximately 40 per cent in that time. That is just incredible, particularly in the light of some of the election promises made by a variety of governments that held power.

We are concerned about the regressive property tax. It cannot be used indefinitely to fund more and more of the burden provided by public education. You would have to look seriously at jeopardizing access to affordable housing for Ontarians. Either the mandate of public education must be reduced, not constantly expanded, or other more progressive means found to fund this public service, at least in part.

I guess the Carleton board is rather concerned that if we are looking at some of the things that are coming forward from the government now, we predict that very shortly we will raise our local levy to our ratepayers. That is where it counts, the bottom line. That is why we are here, that is why you are elected, that is why I am elected. It is the ratepayer who really counts here. He is going to have an increase from \$900 to approximately \$1,700 under the proposed change in direction of financing by the Ministry of Education.

Also in the light of that—and we will touch base with this with my director very shortly—is some of the impact of the throne speech. The throne speech itself indicates a number of changes which will affect us and some other things which you may or may not have considered. For instance, the new tax by the Ontario government on OHIP, which no longer will be paid by individuals but by the salary tax or whatever you want to call it, will affect our board to the amount of about \$1.3 million.

When the Honourable Sean Conway was chatting with us on Friday, we got a little bit into this whole business of pooling commercial and local assessments. We finally pinned him down to find out: "What are we talking about here? Are we talking about the region, are we talking about the Carleton board or the Catholic Carleton board or the Ottawa board?" We did get an answer. We got an answer that it is going to be the Carleton Roman Catholic Board and ourselves and, I guess, some cost-sharing with the francophone board when the government figures out how it is going to do that. We figure, through our finance department, that all matters concerned, we will lose about \$1.8 million, or is it \$800,000?

Mr MacLennan: About \$800,000 will go to the separate school board and then our grants will go up a small proportion. We will end up with a net loss of \$400,000. It is the old story. If you listen to the Stormont Dundas and Glengarry Board of Education and some of the other boards, they would say that all pooling is pooling the poverty they have now. There is great concern there.

Mr Walter: That is one other area.

Among the things we are hit by as a board—and I am sure all other boards in Ontario of a relevant size like ourselves, a growing board in eastern Ontario, are—are some of the ministry's concerns. When it brings forward programs to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio, there is no consideration given that we can find to finance these proposals. Suddenly we have reduced

PTRs in our elementary structures and yet we have to find the resources to either produce the facilities or hire the staff. This is going to continue, of course, so it is another burden again on the local boards.

There is no doubt in our mind that the direction of the provincial government right now is to pass the responsibility of financing more and more on to the backs of the local school boards. I think we would like to see that revert back to the older system, not in the sense that we are greedy by any means: we realize there is no bottomless pit of gold down here. However, it is very difficult when you are a growing board like ourselves to constantly project these costs back to the local ratepayer.

In conclusion, I will give you a number of points, which are on the final page of our delivery. I will then ask Mr MacLennan to make any other relevant points. I do not think I have to read them. We all have the capability in this room.

The Vice-Chairman: You may want to read them into the record.

Mr Walter: All right. In conclusion, specifically in the area of financial resources, we strongly believe:

(a) That the government must resume its leadership role as the major source of funding for public education.

(b) That initiatives mandated by the provincial government must be fully resourced by the government commensurate with the stated objectives of the program or service.

(c) That the expenditure ceilings for grant purposes must reflect realistic—and I emphasize the word “realistic”—costs of providing programs and services.

(d) That consideration be given to allowing school boards access to a portion of progressive tax bases—for example, sales tax and provincial income tax—to reduce the regressive impact of the increasing property tax burden on home owners.

If I may stop there for a minute, something else that is concerning our board is the proposed educational levy. I think that our board particularly is opposed to this, mainly philosophically, because to us it reflects a loss of the universality of funding of education. Suddenly you are asking us to go out and collect a tax and pool this money. Again, the ministry has the right to decide who gets it, yet we are targeting a group of people who have bought new homes to supply us this money. We do not quite feel that is appropriate.

Getting back to our requests:

(e) That capital funding for new schools and much-needed renovations of ageing facilities must be given a higher priority by the provincial government.

(f) That local boards be encouraged to use creative approaches to funding school construction and renovation; for example, access to ministry “equity” from the sale of surplus properties to fund new projects or renovations and lease-back arrangements with developers.

Again, I might emphasize something we have just delivered to your Minister of Education as an approach our board is hoping the minister may see the light of; that is, asking the Minister of Education to allow us to go ahead and finance schools, either through a debenture or borrowing of money, with some kind of guarantees that the government will at least pick that up in the capital forecast down the road and not just consider the fact that we have paid for it and therefore to heck with us. Unfortunately, the direct response I got from your Minister of Education was quite clear, that he does not like precommitment. However, I think if he looks at all the details surrounding our proposal, he may have a change of mind.

(g) That the entire capital grant plan be immediately updated to reflect actual space requirements in today's schools.

By that, we mean that—you know yourselves, most of you in this room are involved—that most of our capital grants are based on 85 per cent capacity of the school. It takes from two to five years to go through the capital grant process. In a growth board like our own, we open a school at 110 per cent capacity and we instantly have a number of portables on the site. As the Minister of Education (Mr Conway) suggested, in one sense, it would not bother him to see seven portables on a public school site. In one sense, we can understand that, but it is very difficult to talk to a parent of a child at a school where there are 12 portables sitting on the site and there is no longer any playground.

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By the way, we realize we are not unique in this situation, and we also realize that a number of the members in this room come from large areas where the growth may be even greater than ours. However, for myself, as the chairman of a board, it is sometimes very difficult to explain to a parent group why this situation exists.

Our final plea is that the government provide leadership for school boards and encourage local systems to adopt long-range planning strategies for educational programs, service and required resources to provide a better sense of direction

and a higher degree of stability within the public schools of Ontario.

Mr Chairman: that is the oral part of the presentation. I would ask your permission to allow our chairman to say a few words, if we are still within the time frame.

The Vice-Chairman: Certainly.

Mrs O'Neill: He is not your chairman.

Mr Walter: Sorry, director of education. We do this all the time on our board, interchange roles.

The Vice-Chairman: Let the record show that there is a difference between the chairman and the director of education.

Mr Walter: I do not get his money.

Mr MacLennan: We are a team. If I could just indicate maybe a couple of examples that would highlight what Chairman Derek Walter has presented, it would be helpful, and then we could open it up to questions. The capital grant plan is now just so far out of sync with the directions of the government that it just flies in the face of everything we are being asked to do. For example, there is no question that the implementation of pupil-teacher ratio at grades 1 and 2, down to 22 to 1 this year and subsequently to 20 to 1 probably next year, is having a dramatic impact on our facilities, especially in any board that has crowded facilities now. Indeed, when we met as eastern Ontario boards on Friday, I was amazed at how many of the smaller boards are now feeling a real facilities pinch, largely because of these new initiatives.

Just to dramatize it, we ordered 50 new portables last year. They were all approved by the regional and the provincial ministry. We initially started off with about a 50 per cent grant on those, but we came in at about 400 more elementary school students than we had projected. We now require another 15 portables. We have ordered those 15 portables, and our grant right now is down to 16.1 per cent because we no longer qualify for additional moneys under the grant structure. Why? Because the loading factor is still 35 to 1 in 1989. Here we are mandated at 20 to 1; the grant is based on 35 to 1, so we no longer fit the formula. In order to be able to meet the needs of our students, to have a place for them to sit, the Carleton board is now funding \$3.1-million worth of new portables for 1989 alone at an 84 per cent level against the local taxpayers; 16.1 per cent against the grants. That is an extreme example.

If you take a look at the impact of the throne speech initiatives—and we have even questioned

the merit of whether we should be going with full-day junior and senior kindergarten, because we are still waiting to see some pedagogical reason as to why we would do that. We understand some of the other reasons, but pedagogically we are not—

Interjection.

Mr MacLennan: Right. And the other one is something called day care. It is an interesting way to fund day care. It is the most expensive way you could possibly fund it, but because you have now shifted the burden of funding education clearly on to the backs of the local taxpayers, it does not matter really whether that cost is an exorbitant one; it is probably cheaper than funding 100 per cent of another system. We realize that it is a dilemma. However, we would like you to know that without putting in any new schools, just using portables, plus the additional staff, in order to implement the throne speech directives with regard to junior and senior kindergarten, it will cost the Carleton Board of Education \$13 million.

Now, that is \$13 million on top of everything else. As the chairman indicated, since his term with the board we have lost about \$42 million worth of revenue in grants, and nothing significant has happened in the Carleton board. We have not suddenly become a board that, because we have increased student population, has all kinds of increased wealth. That just does not happen.

There is a myth that as systems grow the increased revenue we get as a result of the growth offsets the loss of grants. That is not true. Our treasurer and finance people will tell us that as soon as we increase by 10 students it is costing the Carleton board a lot more money. We are growing at the rate of 1,500 students a year so it is costing us an enormous amount of money. We have projected a budget increase this year of 5.5 per cent, budget to budget, and we have warned our trustees that in order to fund that with all of the initiatives, with all of the activity that is going on, we are looking conservatively at a 20 per cent mill rate increase. It was 13 per cent last year, somewhere in the order of nine the year before and it just keeps growing.

We have lost all our flexibility. We are now down to seriously examining what we have come to accept as base programs and base services in order to find the kind of reductions to keep that 20 per cent down at some kind of reasonable rate.

All we see now is a very progressive board like the Carleton board being forced to reduce its services. As we are forced to reduce our services

we would maintain that what also is going to happen is that the kind of service we have been able to share provincially will simply disappear. The Carleton board, I think, has played a tremendous role in being a board that was prepared to do the research and analysis and share that, very freely, right across this province. We are going to lose some of that capacity and if this keeps going, it will expand.

We would also say that although we think the throne speech initiatives have financial implications, we should be looking at the issues in education. I wonder whether the concept of destreaming has really been thought through. I like what you people said. You said, "Research it." We are not researching it at all. Radwanski came out with a little paper and suddenly destreaming is the thing to do. Check with the American counterparts. In spite of the fact that they were not trying to solve our kinds of problems, they were trying to solve cultural problems, they found destreaming did not work. They think we are crazy if we are going to try this now, and here we are about to do it.

It makes no sense at all. It is taking education out of the realm, in my view, of equity, which I think we have striven diligently to have, even with reduced resources, and it is now going to be back to survival of the fittest. There is no way in the world that I will sit here as an educator and pretend that by putting all students in grade 9 in front of individual teachers with one program there is any hope in Hades that those students who are right now in schools like Sir Guy Carleton, our vocational school, and frankly in our general level programs, will be able to survive.

We were striving towards reducing our pupil-teacher ratio from 4.2 per cent annually to half of that in five years. I have indicated to the board that if this initiative is followed through, our objective will be to keep it from doubling in five years.

Those are some of the real issues. We have provided for you, in your package, a document that we sent out to every taxpayer called Dollars and Sense, which reviewed our financial situation and the impact it has had and tried to put it in layman's terms. I think you will find it provocative.

We have also included a copy of our CBE reaction to the April throne speech. You will see some 15 recommendations in there. Our first recommendation to the minister on Friday was: "Please stop the initiatives. Just stop them. Freeze them right now. We don't need any more

initiatives in education. Let us get into place what is already on the table. Give us a chance. OSIS is hardly wet, and now we are going to change the whole thing. Every one of these changes costs an enormous amount of money."

We really do not think the research has gone in to validate some of those major initiatives. We would ask you to please not slow it down; just absolutely stop it and give us a chance in education to go on and carry out the things that we are already being asked to do.

The Vice-Chairman: We are technically out of time but we do have some questions if they can be brief.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Which means I will not be able to get into a debate with you about spurious connections between integration policies in the United States around racism and destreaming, so I will stay away from that one and move instead into the issues of capital because you have gone into more detail than others. With respect to the 35-to-1 basis at which funding has now been dedicated for a long time, how long has that been going for?

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Mr MacLennan: I have been in it 26 years. It has been all 26 years. In other words, it has never been modified. It is 35 to 1 as if we were still funding capital as we probably were back in the 1950s. I came in in the 1960s and it was there when I came in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I do not really have a further question for you, but I would like to have some idea from the ministry when they come—and you can tell Mr Trbovich when he arrives—of what the rationale is behind that kind of assumption in this day and age. It just does not seem to make any sense to me at all.

Mr MacLennan: If we could add to your question, every room is ranked at 35 to 1 as well. Family studies, industrial arts and music rooms are all rated at 35 to 1 and, indeed, we have to count the gymnasium.

Mr Jackson: Not in special education, though.

Mr MacLennan: No, not special ed.

Mr Jackson: That was pulled out in 1978 or 1979.

Mr MacLennan: If we have some rooms dedicated in special ed, we will do better. However, if we use a regular classroom, it is still on the grant plan and it is recognized at 35 to 1. If we have a little cubbyhole that we put the special ed into, that will not have the same impact, but if

we use a regular classroom, which we do in many cases now, that is a 35-to-1 room that is taken out.

Indeed, if you put an auditorium into a new high school, if you happen to be fortunate enough to get that, they will take the square footage and divide it up and they will rate it at 35 to 1 every period of the day, and you do not use that kind of facility every period of the day. You can ask some fascinating questions around that topic.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will, indeed.

With respect to the \$13-million shortfall, or extra cost to the local taxpayer, what kind of change in grant ceilings would you need to effect that, because that was operating grants, I gather, more than capital grants. I was not really clear of the distinction there.

Mr MacLennan: It is both. It is operating and capital.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How much are you over the ceiling now?

Mr MacLennan: We are considerably over-ceiling now. In this brief and in every other brief we have ever presented on this topic, we would indicate that the ceilings have to be brought into realistic terms with the expenditures. I think every board in this province could make that case. It is hurting us. Carleton was often ranked as a "have" board. We have a lot of things but we are not one of the rich spenders in the province, by any stretch of the imagination. We are one of the moderate spenders. We try to run a tight ship.

Mr Kozyra: You ended with stopping the initiatives and I would like to start there because it touches on something I think you mentioned: leadership and changing directions. Other groups have indicated that their approach to unrealistic demands and expectations was a form of streamlining by looking at existing courses and offloading some to community colleges, such as continuing adult education, and perhaps dropping others.

One of your comments, I believe, was that offloading just passes it on to some other public purse. Do you advocate that type of offloading or elimination through careful scrutiny? The previous group suggested there was a possibility. Who should be the initiator, the front-line teachers, the trustees' associations or the government in this new changing direction?

Mr MacLennan: Our view is that education is a lifelong process and it should be a shared activity among a combination of education deliverers in the community, be they public, separate, private, community colleges or univer-

sities. Rather than offload on to somebody else, because you are right that all that is doing is shifting the blame, we should end up with a comprehensive package so that the program is being delivered in the right spot by the right people.

If we have the facilities and we have the staff and we have the expertise to deliver specific programs, then it should be delivered at our level but not at a horrendous expense to the board. I will give you a perfect example. I happened to mention to the chairman coming down on the plane that one group we are not dealing with very well is those who are identified as the trainable retarded—we know that term may change—who reach the magic age of 21. Whereas before we were teaching them on a ratio of four to one or maybe three to one in highly specialized facilities, suddenly, because they reach the magic age of 21, they are okay now. They can go out into society. They are no more ready to go into society the year they turn 21 than the year they turned 20.

We would say we should be in the position, either ourselves or a community college or a combination, to continue to deliver some type of service to them, but we would have to readily admit to you that at the regular grant for a regular student, we cannot afford to even consider that. We now have students and parents who are caught in a dilemma, because we do not have the funding and Algonquin College and its parallels do not appear to have the funding, and it really is a difficulty. I do not think it is a question of saying, "Let's get this over there." I think it is, "Only get this over there if that makes sense." But if it makes more sense to be delivered at the board of education level, then let us have the funding so we can do it, because we will do it more efficiently and more effectively if we have all of those resources I mentioned to you earlier.

Mr Jackson: I was going to ask you if I could get a copy of the report you did for your board on the impact of junior and senior kindergarten to arrive at those numbers, on the assumption that there was a report. If there was—

Mr MacLennan: Yes, there was.

Mr Jackson:—I would love to get a copy of it.

My question now will shift, Lyle, to the recent articulation of the sense of vision of where education financing should go, possibly. I get a sense that part of that is some of the insights you may have gained last Friday from the minister, because I have talked with him as well about that point.

My fear is that we cannot underscore sufficiently the importance of getting the necessary funding, because of what we have done in day care. You think \$13 million is a lot to absorb from a day care decision? Just imagine what the decision to offload significant adult continuing and full secondary programs on to your system will do, especially in light of the fact that we are targeting for a francophone institution in your area: a post-secondary institution which would necessitate some reduction in other post-secondary programs in your region. Obviously, you are sitting there and unless you get funding guarantees, it could have serious implications for your budget.

Could you comment in more detail if you feel comfortable about your discussion with the minister last Friday, or make a more in-depth response on the notion of post-secondary programs being absorbed? I know it has valid arguments. Community colleges cannot give a secondary school graduation diploma in this province; only our school boards can. The makeup courses, equivalency courses, at colleges and universities have not really been highly acclaimed in terms of their content. Could you comment a little more fully on that?

Mr Walter: I would like to comment from a political point of view. I would pass on to our director for any sort of financial analysis you might want. I think something the trustees are getting concerned about in this province—and particularly myself as chairman of the Carleton board; I expressed this to Sean Conway when he was down on Friday—is that we are getting a little worried by the fact that we appear to be becoming the next social agency of the government of Ontario. We have a role to play, which is to educate children, adults and young children. Our role seems to be expanding into areas where we are really not the experts. Our area is, as I said, to provide teachers for our children, and I think that is the expectation of the parents and we cannot ever forget that. I think sometimes we get so lost in the workings of large organizations we forget why we are all here. I am here because of children; this gentleman beside me is here because of children; you are here because of children. If you take children away, we would not have this meeting today.

I think that is the whole point being missed: We are becoming a sort of slough-off agency, in our opinion as trustees, for a number of social directions the government is taking. I am sure there are a lot of places where these could

overlap, but unfortunately the direction is given to us as a mandate; it is never consultative.

When Sean spoke, I was interested in his remark when one of the people in our group suggested to him that we stop, for instance, what is being suggested in the throne speech. Sean, who was beside me, turned around and said, "I would like to remind you, unfortunately, of the situation in Poland, where the cavalry rolled in because they figured the Polish could do it with the cavalry, and yet the German Axis came in with a blitzkrieg and that was the end of it." Then he stopped the discussion, and I thought: "What is he really saying? He's really saying, 'We're telling you we're going to do it now, because if we don't tell you we're going to do it now, nobody is going to do it now and we're all going to be left in the cold.'" If I had a few more minutes with Sean I could tell him about a few more situations where people charged in and did not win the battle.

I think the point we would like to make is that we are not afraid of some changes in direction in policy from the government; however, let us be in on the process. We are the bottom-line people here; we are the trustees who deal with and represent these children; our educators are the professionals. I do not claim to be a professional and neither should anyone in this room claim to be a professional unless you have been in the teaching profession.

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Let's work together on it. There are cost implications here. There are social changes that are major. I think this is what we are trying to say in part of our address to you this morning, that whatever is suggested sometimes cost dollars. Nothing in this life is free. Therefore, if we are about talking dollars, what is the value of this? We do not seem to have any evidence as a board that half of what is being suggested here has been researched. We are just suggesting: "Hey, this is a great idea, guys. Let's all go out and do it." But we are not operating back in the 1940s. We do not have to operate in a blitzkrieg situation. Let us get together and see what the best solution is for our children.

The Vice-Chairman: I think that answers the question, if you are satisfied, because we are running over time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We do have to control Sean's reading list.

Mr Jackson: I wonder what Sean's last book was.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much to both the chairman and the director of education from the Carleton board for coming. We appreciate your comments and your input to the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wonder what biography he is reading now. Thank God he was not reading about the Light Brigade.

The Vice-Chairman: The final presentation this morning is from the Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario. You all have your translation equipment for those of us who do not speak French. We have Ronald Marion, president, and Ginette Gratton, executive director. Good morning and welcome to the committee. We would like you to begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and begin when you are ready. There are 30 minutes set aside for your presentation.

ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES DE L'ONTARIO

M. Marion: Merci. Tout d'abord, j'ai le plaisir de vous présenter, à ma gauche, M^{me} Ginette Gratton, qui est la directrice générale de l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario.

Comme le président m'a déjà présenté, mon nom est Ronald Marion; je suis président de l'Association française des conseillers scolaires de l'Ontario. En outre, je suis conseiller scolaire au Conseil scolaire de Niagara-Sud, ancien président de ce conseil et président de la section de langue française de ce conseil.

Je n'ai pas l'intention de vous lire notre mémoire, mais plutôt de vous résumer les points saillants de celui-ci. Je voudrais également replacer dans un contexte historique, aussi bien que politique, la situation actuelle des écoles de langue française. A part ce que vous avez déjà entendu des conseillers scolaires de langue anglaise, il y a, je pense, un autre aspect historique et d'autres tâches qui restent à accomplir dans le milieu des écoles de langue française, ce qui n'est pas le cas pour les écoles de langue anglaise.

Vous savez sans doute que, dans le passé, certains faits ont suscité des contestations au niveau constitutionnel et au niveau légal. Certaines décisions ont été prises, qui ont établi que les étudiants de langue française ont des droits de représentation et le droit de recevoir une éducation équivalente à celle des étudiants de langue anglaise. Pour nous, cela veut dire l'égalité des chances, l'égalité en matière de qualité de

l'éducation offerte aux étudiants de langue française.

Je sais que le gouvernement actuel a tenté de mettre en place des nouveaux modèles de gestion pour permettre aux étudiants de langue française une meilleure représentation au sein d'un conseil scolaire. Par exemple, afin d'être sûr que nous parlons tous le même langage, prenons l'exemple d'Ottawa-Carleton qui est un conseil de langue française, c'est-à-dire que tous les conseillers sont de langue française. Deuxièmement, il existe, sous la Loi 75, des sections de langue française au sein d'un conseil. Troisièmement, on a des comités consultatifs.

La position de notre association est que les conseillers scolaires de langue française devraient avoir la responsabilité, la charge et la direction des conseils scolaires. Je suis certain qu'il n'y a aucun conseiller scolaire anglophone de cette province qui va vous dire qu'il ne veut pas défendre l'autonomie du conseil scolaire, pour assurer la direction de son conseil scolaire et l'avenir de ses élèves. Nous n'en voulons pas moins; c'est-à-dire qu'on considère qu'à l'heure actuelle, l'éducation en langue française dans cette province accuse un retard et qu'il est temps de s'occuper de ce retard.

En conséquence, trois thèmes sont soulevés dans notre mémoire :

Premièrement, nous voulons une pleine gestion : nous voulons pouvoir décider de notre sort.

Deuxièmement, nous voulons un financement adéquat et équitable, qui soit de nature permanente.

Troisièmement, nous voulons un financement provisoire pour éliminer les retards accusés jusqu'ici par les écoles de langue française.

Alors, c'est dans cet esprit que je vous demande de passer à la page 4. Vous allez y trouver les recommandations de nature générale qui seront répétées tout au long de notre mémoire.

La première recommandation, c'est de demander au gouvernement qu'il s'engage formellement à donner aux francophones les structures de gestion scolaire qui reconnaîtront leur autonomie entière en matière d'éducation en langue française. Je vous donnerai plus tard des exemples, pour vous montrer pourquoi on pense que ce n'est pas le cas en ce moment.

Deuxièmement, nous demandons qu'entretiens, le ministère de l'Éducation élimine dans les plus brefs délais les comités consultatifs de langue française, les CCLF, et les convertisse en sections de langue française. En effet, les comités consultatifs de cette province n'ont

qu'un rôle consultatif, c'est-à-dire qu'ils n'ont aucun pouvoir sur les décisions qui sont prises au sujet des élèves pour lesquels on achète les services d'un autre conseil scolaire.

La deuxième recommandation, à la même page, c'est que le gouvernement de l'Ontario reconnaisse ses obligations constitutionnelles à l'égard des francophones, en procédant à la réforme du système de financement pour qu'il soit possible, partout dans la province, d'offrir aux francophones des services éducatifs équivalents à ceux offerts à leurs concitoyens anglophones.

Troisièmement, nous demandons que le gouvernement crée une commission de gestion en éducation en langue française, qui étudiera et recommandera au gouvernement des modèles de conseils scolaires de langue française appropriés aux besoins des diverses communautés et les modes de financement nécessaires pour assurer leur viabilité.

Je pars de cette recommandation pour vous dire que la position de l'association est qu'on devrait avoir des conseils scolaires de langue française là où la communauté les désire et là où c'est viable. Mais, à notre avis, c'est à la province qu'incombe la responsabilité de rendre l'éducation viable ; c'est-à-dire que les enfants ont droit à des services équivalents en éducation. Je crois que la province a la responsabilité d'assurer la viabilité du système d'éducation dans lequel se trouvent les enfants.

Sous le régime de la Loi 75, comme vous le savez, les sections de langue française et les sections de langue anglaise ont des droits exclusifs ; c'est-à-dire que lorsqu'il s'agit de la planification, de la programmation, du recrutement et de l'embauche de leur personnel, les sections prennent la décision. Dans le cas des francophones de cette province, la majorité de ces décisions sont prises par trois personnes seulement.

C'est un autre problème, parce qu'à notre avis, trois têtes, ce n'est pas assez pour avoir une responsabilité exclusive. On a demandé au gouvernement d'augmenter ce nombre à au moins cinq personnes.

Mais il y a aussi des choses en commun. C'est la situation dans laquelle se trouvent les conseillers scolaires francophones qui ont un droit exclusif, celui de prendre toutes les décisions sur le sort et sur l'avenir de leurs élèves ; mais c'est le conseil qui décide du budget. C'est le conseil qui décide des fonds qui seront prélevés pour pourvoir aux besoins. Un des articles de la Loi 75

dit bien que la majorité doit pourvoir aux besoins de la minorité ou des écoles de la minorité.

La réalité est que cet article, qui devrait – Il y a même une décision de la province de l'Ontario qui suggère que ça veut dire l'équivalence. La réalité est que la section minoritaire n'a vraiment pas les moyens d'aller contester lorsqu'on prend une décision, selon laquelle le taux d'imposition de la municipalité cette année devrait être de quatre pour cent et non de sept ou huit pour cent, et que les écoles de langue française ont trop demandé.

1150

Alors, la réalité est que cet article dépose sur la minorité la responsabilité de contester. Dans certains conseils, on a même contesté que la minorité n'a pas droit au chapitre, parce qu'il n'est pas écrit d'embaucher des spécialistes, des avocats pour tenter de faire valoir ce que veut dire « pourvoir aux besoins ».

La difficulté dans laquelle se trouve toujours la minorité de cette province, c'est de quêter ou de faire des plaidoyers devant la majorité pour tenter de lui faire comprendre que les besoins, tels qu'on les identifie, doivent être comblés.

Cela n'a pas toujours été facile. Jusqu'à maintenant, je pense que tout le monde est conscient – les conseillers scolaires de cette province – que la Loi 75, telle qu'elle est rédigée, ne fonctionne pas ; on a, et on aura encore, des contestations si on ne peut obtenir de réformes majeures.

C'est pourquoi on vous suggère les recommandations qui sont à la page 7 :

Premièrement, que le gouvernement amende la Loi sur l'éducation pour donner aux sections de langue française le contrôle exclusif de leur budget. Encore une fois, les conseillers scolaires francophones ne sont pas moins élus que les conseillers scolaires anglophones. Ils ne répondent pas moins aux besoins de leur population que les conseillers scolaires anglophones.

A mon avis, ils ont démontré qu'ils sont aussi responsables, qu'ils sont conscients de leur vocation en éducation et qu'ils désirent la meilleure qualité d'éducation pour leurs étudiants. Même si la loi était amendée, on pourrait la qualifier en disant que si une population ambitionnait sur l'autre, on pourrait soumettre la question au Commissariat aux langues officielles – un amendement qu'on a aussi demandé au gouvernement de considérer.

Mais qu'on ne place pas le fardeau sur la minorité, qui n'a pas les moyens, ni même peut-être le droit, d'embaucher ces experts pour faire valoir l'article 277o de la loi, qui dit que la

majorité doit pourvoir aux besoins; qu'on change, si vous le voulez, son fusil d'épaule et qu'on place le fardeau sur la majorité, qui a les moyens d'aller prouver que la minorité demande plus qu'elle ne devrait exiger.

La deuxième recommandation à la page 7, c'est que le ministère de l'Éducation organise, dès l'automne 1989, des sessions de formation pour les administrateurs et les conseillers scolaires de tous les conseils qui oeuvrent sous le régime de la Loi 75, afin de leur expliquer l'esprit de la loi et le processus de la préparation et de l'administration du budget des sections de langue française.

La raison d'être de cette recommandation est que la loi ne fonctionne pas et que les administrateurs qui se trouvent face à une nouvelle loi qui crée, en réalité, presque deux conseils à l'intérieur d'un même conseil, sont peut-être réticents d'interpréter la loi de façon favorable à la minorité.

Je peux vous donner quelques exemples: lorsque, dans mon conseil, on voulait embaucher des professeurs et aussi accepter leur démission, on nous a dit qu'on n'avait pas le pouvoir de le faire, même si la loi était claire — On a même dû demander au ministère de l'Éducation d'intervenir.

Dans certains conseils, sous la Loi 75, on répartit le budget en disant qu'il existe des services centralisés ou des dépenses centralisées et des dépenses propres aux sections. Lorsqu'on regarde le salaire du surintendant de la programmation, qui n'a rien à voir avec les écoles de langue française, d'habitude, ou celui des autres surintendants, qui ont très peu à faire avec la section de langue française —

On demandait à la section de payer des montants énormes pour ces services centralisés, parce qu'aussitôt que les revenus sont reçus par le conseil, on prend ces revenus, on paie les services centralisés et on remet le reste aux sections. C'est ce qui se passait dans notre conseil; on a de nouveau demandé au ministère de l'Éducation d'intervenir pour décider si la façon de répartir les dépenses centralisées était juste. On est passé d'un déficit de 200 000 \$ à un surplus de 150 000 \$.

Il s'agit là d'un exemple de ce qui se passe, à mon avis, dans toute la province. On a des rapports de beaucoup d'autres régions où on a vécu la même expérience.

Si le ministère veut nous imposer encore cette loi telle qu'elle existe, il faut sans doute s'assurer que les administrateurs la respectent et que les

rapports financiers des conseils scolaires soient vérifiés pour s'assurer que cette loi est respectée.

The Vice-Chairman: Perhaps I could just point out that you are about halfway through and you have 17 recommendations, so—

Mr Marion: Thank you, I will rush it.

A la page 8, les taxes scolaires. Le problème qu'on a avec les taxes scolaires, c'est que, dans le moment, on identifie — Par exemple, en vertu de la Loi 125, on a déjà une contestation devant les tribunaux. Tout le monde dans la province est anglophone, à moins qu'on ne se soit identifié comme francophone lors du dernier recensement. Cela cause, sans aucun doute, des problèmes en matière de répartition ou de nombre de conseillers scolaires francophones, parce que si quelqu'un, comme on l'a démontré devant le tribunal, était décédé sans qu'on ait signalé son décès au ministère du Revenu, cette personne, même si elle était francophone, serait considérée comme anglophone. Il arrive la même chose sous la Loi 109, qui décide des revenus du conseil scolaire d'Ottawa-Carleton.

Dans ce cas-ci, vous verrez dans l'annexe que, malgré le fait que la population scolaire soit de 16,3 pour cent, le conseil scolaire d'Ottawa-Carleton ne reçoit que 5,9 pour cent des taxes résidentielles et commerciales. Bien que la population francophone de la région représente 12,9 pour cent de la population totale, on ne reçoit que 5,9 pour cent des revenus.

Cela crée tout de suite une injustice. On demande que la loi, et que toutes les lois qui s'appliquent, soit modifiées pour éliminer cette discrimination. Lorsqu'on aura des conseils scolaires de langue française, va-t-on assister au même scénario? C'est une situation à éviter.

La recommandation numéro 7, qui se trouve à la page 9, vous demande, dans le cas d'un autre recensement, de bien considérer sa mise en oeuvre, qui est très importante pour assurer au moins que le recensement reflète la réalité.

Au niveau des taxes industrielles et commerciales, on sait qu'une réforme est déjà engagée. Par contre, je crois que le cas d'Ottawa-Carleton, comme je l'ai souligné, démontre tout de suite que, pour les conseils scolaires de langue française, cette réforme ne va pas assez loin. Je pense qu'à l'annexe A, les chiffres sont éloquentes: ils démontrent justement que ça n'est pas possible pour les systèmes de langue française, qui ont des besoins très particuliers, dont je parlerai sans doute plus tard.

Au niveau des subventions générales et spéciales, ce qu'on a tenté de vous démontrer, et ceci se trouve dans les recommandations 9 et 10,

c'est qu'à l'heure actuelle, le ministère de l'Éducation s'est engagé à prendre de nouvelles initiatives. Je ne dis pas que ces nouvelles initiatives ne constituent pas une bonne idée; pourvu qu'elles soient bien recherchées et qu'elles aillent dans la bonne direction, on les encourage. Par contre, ce qui arrive souvent, c'est que le gouvernement s'engage dans de nouvelles initiatives pour un an ou deux, et retire ensuite les subventions. Après avoir été témoins de cela pendant des années, je pense qu'il est peut-être temps de revoir ce qui est à la base —

On a eu de nouvelles initiatives qui sont devenues maintenant des directions, qui sont absolument établies dans la province et qui devraient faire partie de la subvention de base. Quand on parle des plafonds, on ne peut pas refléter la situation existante; du moins, qu'on regarde de nouveau quelles sont les priorités du gouvernement de l'Ontario et qu'on regarde le coût réel de ces priorités.

On vous indique également qu'il y a sans doute des directions et des subventions spéciales qui sont nécessaires pour augmenter la subvention de base; mais cela demande, je crois, un éclaircissement de la part du gouvernement.

Au niveau des subventions, on vous demande aussi, à la recommandation numéro 12, de prendre en considération le fait que les écoles de langue française, partout dans la province, accusent des retards énormes. Vous connaissez peut-être les résultats, en sciences et en mathématiques, qui ont démontré que les francophones de la province ont des problèmes très particuliers. Si le gouvernement ne décide pas bientôt de s'engager formellement à fournir, conformément à ces principes, les finances nécessaires pour qu'on puisse améliorer la situation, on va faire face à d'énormes difficultés dans l'avenir. Au niveau des subventions d'immobilisation, la même chose s'applique.

1200

Les critères pour les écoles de langue française sont-ils les mêmes? Franchement, je n'ai aucune idée de ce que sont les critères pour les fonds d'immobilisation destinés aux écoles de langue française. On en a reçu très peu au cours des dernières années. Je crois qu'il est temps d'éclaircir les besoins et de décider si on a déjà obtenu l'équivalence dans cette province au niveau des biens immobiliers des écoles où étudient les enfants.

A notre avis, il est clair, surtout avec le problème que nous pose la Loi 75, que même si le gouvernement nous octroie des fonds pour une nouvelle école, c'est le conseil, non pas la

section, qui doit décider de combler la différence nécessaire pour faire bâtir l'école. Cela nous place encore dans une situation particulièrement difficile et exige beaucoup de négociations pour pouvoir obtenir l'appui de la majorité.

La dernière chose que j'aimerais peut-être mentionner, pour vous laisser le temps — Je sais qu'il y a la recommandation 17, qui demande que le ministère porte sa contribution à 60 pour cent du coût de l'éducation. Peut-être est-ce possible, peut-être pas; ce n'est peut-être pas réaliste de le demander. Le fait est que les écoles de langue française ont des besoins particuliers.

Si on n'a pas l'appui du gouvernement, on va avoir des difficultés énormes à l'avenir. On a un taux d'assimilation qui est très élevé. Les écoles sont vraiment l'avenir de la langue française dans cette province. Si le gouvernement ne s'engage pas à appuyer les écoles de langue française par un appui financier, je crois que les écoles de langue française vont malheureusement avoir des difficultés énormes à surmonter.

Mais le 60 pour cent qui est là — En tant que conseiller scolaire, je pense qu'il y a beaucoup de questions qui doivent être posées. Est-ce la faute du gouvernement ou est-ce la faute du système d'éducation, qui continue de coûter de plus en plus cher? Est-ce le fait que 80 pour cent des coûts de l'éducation sont attribuables aux salaires des enseignants, qu'on ne peut pas contrôler au niveau local? Le gouvernement doit-il prendre ces nouvelles initiatives en considération, surtout pour les écoles de langue française, pour pouvoir au moins en assurer la survie?

Cela nécessite sans doute une étude. A mon avis, c'est vraiment une étude approfondie des coûts de l'éducation qui est nécessaire pour établir les directions, pour savoir comment doit se financer le système d'éducation. En tant que citoyen de cette province, je suis convaincu que ceux qui, au niveau local, paient les taxes sont peut-être vraiment fatigués, épuisés — Il faut être responsable à tous les niveaux. Je pense que le moment est venu pour que le ministère de l'Éducation et la province considèrent de façon responsable l'avenir de l'éducation et l'engagement formel qui sera nécessaire pour les écoles de langue française.

J'espère que je n'ai pas été trop long et qu'il nous reste un peu de temps pour des questions.

The Vice-Chairman: Yes, indeed there is and thank you for allowing that.

M. R. F. Johnston: J'aimerais savoir quelques faits, si je le peux. Combien de comités consultatifs y a-t-il encore dans la province?

M. Marion : Actuellement, il y en a cinq.

M. R. F. Johnston : Combien de sections y a-t-il ?

Mme Gratton : Il y a 66 sections, dont 40 sont catholiques et 26 publiques, et deux conseils scolaires de langue française.

M. R. F. Johnston : Il me semble que dans le mémoire, il n'y a pas seulement un manque d'action suivant le projet de Loi 75, mais aussi un manque de discussions. C'est vrai. Qu'est-ce qui existe maintenant comme système de discussion avec le gouvernement concernant les changements que vous avez demandés ?

M. Marion : Le gouvernement, je pense, avait mis sur pied un comité pour étudier la Loi 75. Ce comité s'est réuni à maintes reprises. Un consensus a été établi au niveau du comité.

Ce rapport devait être distribué partout dans la province, mais tout a été gelé aussitôt qu'il y a eu le changement ministériel. M. Ward a changé de responsabilités et M. Conway est devenu ministre de l'Éducation. C'est peut-être pour cette raison qu'on accuse un retard mais, en tous cas, nous n'avons reçu aucune nouvelle depuis ce temps.

M. R. F. Johnston : Vous n'avez aucune idée si les mêmes sortes de recommandations existent dans ce rapport, ce consensus ?

M. Marion : Ce rapport est beaucoup plus détaillé sur la Loi 75. Dans ce rapport, on n'apporte que des modifications concernant l'aspect financier.

M. R. F. Johnston : Je suis un peu étonné par le besoin d'une formation pour les directeurs et directrices en éducation de la province concernant le projet de loi. Les problèmes dont vous avez parlé, les exemples que vous avez donnés, existent-ils partout ? Est-ce là un problème particulier à une région comme celle du Niagara ?

M. Marion : Non, ce n'est pas du tout particulier. Je peux vous donner de nombreux exemples, comme Windsor, Sudbury — Nous avions un système d'éducation où les responsabilités étaient claires et, tout à coup, il y a un nouveau système, avec une loi qui est sujette à interprétation. Selon l'orientation de la personne, cette loi peut être interprétée pour favoriser l'une ou l'autre des deux sections ; peut-être est-ce dû au fait qu'il n'y a qu'un roi dans un royaume, et que ça cause des problèmes de changements. Cela nécessite une évolution, mais cette évolution est très difficile à réaliser.

M. R. F. Johnston : Je pense que nous avons besoin de plus de temps pour considérer cette sorte de problèmes. Vous êtes le premier à

exposer ce type de problèmes devant notre comité. J'ai beaucoup d'autres questions, mais il n'y a pas assez de temps maintenant. Peut-être pourrions-nous poursuivre notre conversation après la réunion, pour obtenir des éclaircissements.

M. Marion : On serait heureux de revenir pour répondre à vos questions, si vous le voulez.

The Vice-Chairman : We sometimes wish there was one only king in each kingdom. Mr Furlong is one of the kings.

M. Furlong : Premièrement, merci pour votre mémoire. C'était très intéressant. Je ne pense pas que vous serez surpris d'apprendre que la plupart des groupes qui se sont présentés ici ont demandé la même chose : si on avait plus d'argent dans le système, tout marcherait bien mieux.

Je voudrais vous poser seulement deux petites questions.

Premièrement, dans une recommandation, vous parlez d'un montant de 60 pour cent des coûts. Dans la recommandation 9, je pense, vous parlez des coûts approuvés, et dans la recommandation 17, vous parlez seulement des coûts à 60 pour cent. Vous avez fait une distinction à l'effet que les francophones ont peut-être des besoins différents des autres.

Lorsque vous parlez des coûts approuvés, qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par là ? Nous sommes dans une situation où 60 pour cent des coûts approuvés — C'est la position qui figure dans le rapport Macdonald. Comme le disait l'autre jour M. Mahoney, est-ce qu'on parle de 60 pour cent d'un chèque en blanc ? Vous indiquez que vous voulez des choses spéciales ; quelles sont ces choses spéciales ?

M. Marion : Le partage de l'assiette fiscale, c'est vraiment — Comme vous le savez, on parlait du fait que, de 1975 je crois à 1989, la part du gouvernement des coûts de l'éducation est passée de 61,3 pour cent à 47 pour cent. Lorsqu'on parle des coûts approuvés, il s'agit plutôt des subventions de base. Je pense que les autres associations de conseils scolaires auraient sans doute dit que le pourcentage de participation du gouvernement au coût de l'éducation ne devrait pas être de 47 pour cent, mais plutôt de 60 ou de 65 pour cent. C'était pour dire la même chose, mais la réalité est que — J'aimerais dire que je suis réaliste ; peut-être n'est-ce pas possible. Il y a peut-être un taux de croissance ; c'est-à-dire que le coût de l'éducation augmente si vite dans la province —

Dans un sens, il me semble que le comité devrait se pencher sur la raison — Il n'incombe pas au comité de dire : « S'il s'agit d'un coût qui est justifié, le gouvernement devra avoir une

participation raisonnable. » En effet, le gouvernement est le roi dans le royaume de l'éducation ; que vous le sachiez ou non, que vous le croyez ou non, c'est le gouvernement qui décide des initiatives à prendre et qui nous apporte les changements. C'est vous qui obligez les conseillers scolaires de la municipalité à aller chercher de l'argent pour faire ce que vous avez dit que vous feriez.

1210

Alors, si c'est le cas, vous êtes plus que des partenaires à 47 pour cent ; vous êtes des partenaires majoritaires. Le gouvernement a une responsabilité — Si vous voulez être majoritaires et prendre les décisions, vous devez payer votre part. Les conseillers scolaires sont fatigués de payer plus ou moins que leur part et d'aller voir les contribuables et la municipalité pour leur demander de payer. Cela se fait plus facilement si vous le faites vous-mêmes.

Nous souhaitons vous suggérer ça comme grand principe. Prendre en considération les subventions spéciales, c'est plutôt examiner les subventions destinées aux dépenses approuvées du conseil scolaire. Les plafonds ne sont pas réalistes ; c'est plutôt ça.

On vous a aussi demandé, dans une autre recommandation — Si vous faites une étude sur les écoles de langue française de cette province, vous allez vous rendre compte qu'on accuse un retard. Les statistiques de l'examen de sciences et de mathématiques vous le démontrent. Si vous regardez les actifs immobiliers des écoles de langue française de cette province, vous vous rendez compte aussi qu'on accuse un retard. C'est pour rattraper ces retards-là que nous vous demandons des subventions.

M. Furlong : Juste une autre question très brève. Vous parlez de l'évaluation commerciale et industrielle, qui est seulement divisée entre ceux qui sont sous la juridiction d'un conseil scolaire. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez d'une situation où ce serait dans toute la province, pas seulement sur le territoire d'une commission scolaire ?

M. Marion : Alors, vous voulez dire un fonds commun qui ne serait pas régional, mais plutôt provincial ?

M. Furlong : Provincial, oui.

M. Marion : Pour ceux qui sont pauvres, ça va être bien, mais pour ceux qui sont riches, ce sera moins bien. Ce qui est important, c'est de savoir comment faire la répartition de ces impôts. On peut aller les chercher, mais comment ensuite les distribuer ?

Notre mémoire dit que la formule pour remettre l'argent aux conseils scolaires devrait se baser sur l'effectif scolaire, sur le nombre d'étudiants ; parce qu'après tout, qu'est-ce qui compte ? Ce qui compte, c'est le nombre d'étudiants. Si on veut assurer la qualité de l'éducation, ce n'est pas en remettant moins d'argent aux conseils scolaires qui ont beaucoup d'étudiants qu'on y arrivera, mais plutôt en leur donnant le montant qui correspond à leurs besoins, parce que c'est le nombre d'étudiants qui détermine les besoins. La réforme fiscale qui est annoncée pour les conseils scolaires ne fera pas ça.

M. Furlong : Merci.

M. Marion : Il y a peut-être quelque chose qu'on peut rajouter ici.

Mme Gratton : Ce qu'on demande présentement au gouvernement, c'est la mise sur pied d'une commission de gestion pour étudier le territoire ontarien, étudier les concentrations de francophones et examiner comment on pourrait faire des conseils scolaires de langue française sur tout le territoire et les financer pour que ce soit viable. Cette commission devrait probablement aborder la question du partage des taxes industrielles, commerciales et résidentielles.

Je pense que ce qu'on veut, en tant que francophones, c'est de ne pas être obligés de toujours vivre aux dépens du gouvernement. Vous avez dit tantôt que les autres groupes vous ont demandé d'augmenter le financement ; oui, on demande peut-être en partie d'augmenter, mais on demande de réorganiser les priorités pour tenir compte des besoins spécifiques des francophones.

Où on demande d'augmenter, il me semble que c'est clair dans le mémoire, c'est de façon provisoire, jusqu'à ce qu'on ait rattrapé le temps perdu ; jusqu'à ce que des endroits comme Kingston, où l'école secondaire n'a même pas de système d'égouts, de système de tuyauterie, et où il faut que les élèves sortent de l'école pour aller à la toilette à l'école anglaise — jusqu'à ce que des problèmes comme ça soient réglés partout sur le territoire.

L'exemple de Kingston n'est pas unique ; il y en a d'autres qu'on pourrait soulever dans toute la province. Ce sont des histoires à faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête. Mais jusqu'à ce que ça, ce soit rétabli, jusqu'à ce qu'on ait la perception que les services sont équivalents, on demande des subventions provisoires spéciales pour l'éducation en langue française.

A part cela, on voudrait qu'une commission examine comment on pourrait financer les

conseils scolaires de langue française pour que, à travers l'imposition, la responsabilité soit autant celle des contribuables que celle du gouvernement et que les droits constitutionnels des francophones deviennent en réalité une responsabilité sociale, celle de tout le monde.

The Vice-Chairman: I would like to thank you very much for your presentation this morning. It has been most helpful. Thank you for coming.

M. Marion : Merci.

The Vice-Chairman: The select committee will now recess until two o'clock. Recognizing the pressures on all members—we have a long afternoon—if we could be as close to 2 pm as possible, it would be appreciated.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We were so good this morning.

The Vice-Chairman: We have done well.

The committee recessed at 1216.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in committee room 1.

The Vice-Chairman: I call to order the afternoon session of the select committee on education. Our first presenters this afternoon are the Coalition for Public Education. Would you folks like to take the front seat? Just before you begin, though, David Pond would like to address the committee about the latest summary that has been handed out and should be on members' desks. Go ahead, please have a seat and we will be right with you.

Mr Pond: Very briefly, this is the third and last summary you will receive while we are hearing witnesses. There will be another one either at the end of this week or the beginning of next week. The only other point I would make is that some of the items have been moved around within categories for the purpose of greater coherence. Other than that, that is it.

The Vice-Chairman: Okay, are there any questions to David on any of that? If not, we will move on to our presenters.

We would like to welcome you here this afternoon. Thank you for coming. We have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation, and hopefully that will include time for questions by members of the committee. Please introduce yourself and those with you and begin when you are ready.

COALITION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr McClintock: Thank you very much. I would like to begin on my right with Dr Dianne Meaghan. I have her as Ms Dianne Meaghan, but she has just very recently received her doctorate. On my left is Reverend Craig Cribar and on my far right is Reverend Eberhardt Schwantes. I am George McClintock. All of us together represent the Coalition for Public Education.

We have a relatively brief presentation. Again, realizing we have 30 minutes with you and wishing to provide some opportunity for discussion, we will proceed with the actual reading of the brief.

The committee for public education wishes to thank you for this third opportunity to appear before you, the select committee on education. This time we intend to express some of our concerns about the longer-range implications of funding policies for elementary and secondary education in Ontario.

What we will present during the time allocated to us follows upon our two previous submissions to you of 26 July 1988 and 11 October 1988 respectively, which are included in appendix A, and builds upon them. We would re-emphasize our conviction that, in the long run, public education will serve Ontario and Canadian society best, provided it is planned, funded and delivered to help each person who uses it to maximize her or his human potential. Accordingly, in our view, educational policies and practices should be formulated and implemented with this overarching objective always in mind.

We acknowledge the critical relationship between the allocation and distribution of the actual resources available and the quality and variety of educational opportunities and their potential outcomes for all the people of Ontario. We recognize the need to maintain as far as possible the equitable distribution of educational funding received through legislated grants from provincial revenues over and above the supplemental amounts raised through local property tax assessments.

We advocate the growing need for wise stewardship of these provincial and municipal resources. We believe that one commonsense way to do this would be to integrate and unify common services and program elements wherever possible. We are convinced that the promotion of practical, unified school boards would, in the long run, prove the most affordable, responsible and effective direction to take into the next century.

We believe it to be absolutely essential that there be creative and responsible long-range planning so that renewable resources can be maintained intact and further developed and that nonrenewable resources can be cherished and kept available to benefit future generations. We regard the alienation of educational tax bases from public education as, in effect, the permanent destruction of a virtually nonrenewable resource, which would be bound to reduce the funding resources available to future generations using the public education system.

We are convinced that money invested in education can usually, if not always, ensure a better socioeconomic return on each dollar spent for education than is possible for any spent in any remedial or correctional social spending by a society which has the long-term wellbeing of all its people at heart. Inadequate educational

programs in the present are very likely to increase the need and compound the costs—social and political as well as economic—for future citizens and taxpayers. It is a truism that a child's education should begin at least a generation before it is born, preferably by having parents who themselves have been as well educated as their personal abilities and opportunities permit.

We believe that in order to provide for the most adequate and affordable education of the future citizens of this province, it would be wise for the government of the day to build up educational reserve funds which might help to endow future public education programs and projects when adverse times might otherwise lead to their virtual starvation. Accordingly, we would recommend that consideration be given to the feasibility and advisability of investing a certain proportion of provincial and municipal revenues annually in an educational heritage endowment fund so that Ontarians of generations and centuries yet to come might benefit.

The coalition does not propose to provide a detailed analysis or critique of contemporary or projected policies, legislation, regulations or formulas for funding elementary and secondary education in Ontario. Rather, we propose for your consideration four recommendations respecting, in turn: unified school boards; the maintenance of the present public education funding base; increased educational funding now to reduce future socioeconomic and political costs for the taxpayers and citizens of our province, and the establishment of an educational heritage endowment fund to provide responsibly and creatively for the maintenance of adequate and equitable education in the generations yet to come.

Each member of our team will read into the record one of these four recommendations, in this order: Craig Cribar, Eberhardt Schwantes, Dianne Meaghan and myself, George McClintock. Since we believe that each motion speaks for itself we will offer only very brief textual comments with the intention of providing more time for you to discuss them with us.

Mr Cribar: On unified school boards: The Coalition of Public Education recommends that the government of Ontario, in view of the manifest educational, administrative, operational and economic advantages inherent in the unified school board concept, without delay, and preferably not later than 1 September 1990:

(a) give legislative and administrative approval for the establishment of unified school boards as the preferred normative model for each

educational jurisdiction so that by the year 2000 each region and municipality may benefit from the advantages of the same; and

(b) provide guidelines and suitable incentives to encourage coterminous and/or neighbouring public and separate school boards to co-operate to develop practical and mutual compatible working unified school boards appropriate to their respective jurisdictions.

The unified school board concept commends itself for development and use as a practical way to combine and reduce many of the costs which result from the implementation of full public funding of the separate secondary schools as well as to the public secondary schools. It could enable programs special to either co-operating system to be carried out and achieve notable economies in the use of available resources.

It would permit a greater variety of programs to meet the needs of individual students who would enjoy maximum accessibility to the programs of their personal choice made possible under the umbrella of the unified approach. There would be built into such a system far greater opportunities for all to benefit from a harmonious pluralistic society through shared schooling.

Mr Schwantes: On the maintenance of the public education funding base: We recommend that the government of Ontario, unless and until it establishes school boards universally throughout the province on a unified assessment base, take such legislative, fiscal and other measures as may be necessary without delay to maintain inviolate in perpetuity, for the benefit of the public elementary and secondary school systems and those who use them, their present and historic funding bases, including taxes assessed on householders and commercial and industrial properties not specifically designated for separate school usage.

1420

We are aware of the promises that state that public education will be adequately, if not generously, compensated for any transfers of its taxation base. We hope that they will be honoured and proved accurate. We are, however, made uneasy by the implications of some of the tax changes currently being proposed at the federal and municipal levels for taxation generally. There are pessimistic forecasts now being made about extremely negative impacts of the national federal sales tax upon our economy and our way of life.

It is rumoured that provincial governments in turn will be obliged to levy or increase their own

sales taxes to generate more adequate revenues for their needs. What would be the impact of the imposition of market value assessment upon the pockets of the taxpayers and the municipal and educational taxes of Metropolitan Toronto? It does not appear to us to be either wise or timely to contemplate any major adjustments to provincial education funding policies before more can be known about these other wild factors.

Dr Meaghan: On current educational investment priorities: We recommend that the government of Ontario review its funding priorities so that more resources may become immediately available for elementary and secondary educational programs to serve as remedial and preventive measures to counteract the effects of antisocial and anti-educational factors such as poverty, illiteracy, apathy and the like with which so many children have to contend, in order that they may more fully maximize their individual potentials and that high future costs of measures to remedy social and educational problems transmitted from generation to generation.

We acknowledge that public elementary and secondary education cannot and should not be expected all by itself to solve all the problems of the society it serves. However, with more available resources and more creative approaches much more might be accomplished towards educating children to live harmoniously in a more just society. Smaller class sizes, better facilities, more remedial programs, better nutrition, life and life enhancement programs for the disadvantaged as well as for the advantaged each require additional funding. But their provision would testify unequivocally to our government's and our society's commitment to provide education second to none in an environment most conducive towards its achievement.

Mr McClintock: On the Ontario heritage educational endowment fund: We recommend that the government of Ontario explore the feasibility of establishing suitable long-range educational and funding policies which will guarantee that a certain minimum proportion of the provincial income annually, say 20 per cent or some other fixed percentage of gross income, be assigned to education in any current budget and, furthermore, that a certain percentage of this amount be invested in the Ontario heritage educational endowment fund, the income from which shall be dedicated to supplementing the resources available for the educational needs of future generations in this province.

No one can foresee precisely what the future may bring. Futurologists assure us that there may well be changes and developments coming for which we can do very little to prepare. However, we can count on births, deaths and taxes. Projections of population growth as sketched in the Insight section of the Toronto Star of Sunday 17 September 1989, section B, pages B1 and B4, estimate a possible "manageable 7.4 billion and an almost incredible and possibly unmanageable 12.4 billion around the year 2050." Death will come to people in our relatively much more affluent society at increasingly advanced ages and after longer periods of retirement, requiring larger sums for pensions and social benefits from a proportionately smaller proportion of working taxpayers.

In future times when our descendants may be faced with inflationary currencies, populations and tax burdens, would they not have great reason to rejoice if we, their ancestors, had not squandered our renewable and nonrenewable resources? How much more might they have cause to be thankful if there were to be an educational endowment fund available for their use which kept growing through the centuries and enabled them more adequately to meet the needs and opportunities of their own children and grandchildren, all of this with the benefits of a harmonious, unified school system. What more could they ask for?

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much, Reverend, and other presenters.

Mr Kozyra: Thank you for your presentation. I guess there would be what you might call political cynics or cynics of politics who might say that this is what Bill Davis had in mind all along, what you propose in the long run. I have heard that from many sources, this kind of unification, after all the problems of trying to bring equality on stream.

I am wondering how in your proposal, though, you take account of the very basic differences in the separate school system that account for its distinctness from the other, the things it treasures and values so deeply, and how would that be accommodated in what you propose in the one unified system that, to me, seems to put a lot of emphasis, perhaps not exclusively but mainly, on cost-effectiveness.

Mr Cribar: Part of the problem that I have in dealing with the whole system of the two different school boards is that during the eleven and a half years that I was a school board trustee on the York Region Board of Education, there was a tremendous amount of co-operation

between the York region public school board and the York region separate school board. We shared facilities, we shared program, we shared busing, we shared psychological services. All of that sharing was done, and it could only have been done with consultation between the two boards.

People are saying, how can you accomplish this consultation? It has been accomplished in the past, and I cannot understand now why it is not continuing. The two boards appear to be going their separate ways, perhaps because one is saying: "We feel we are distinct. We feel we want to go our own way. We want to do our own planning. We do not want to be involved in any other way with someone else."

I do not know whether that is the case or not, but it would appear to me that for eleven and a half years, as an elected representative representing a community of 30,000 people in which there were the two systems, there was absolutely no difficulty in consultation and sharing of facilities. We are not talking about trying to share philosophies, because we know there are two different philosophies. Both philosophies about the education of the child perhaps are the same, but on the content of education, there are different philosophies.

I know there is that difficulty and I would not even expect anyone to step into that no man's land, but there are so many, many things that can be shared that will be so much more economical than each system going its separate way.

Mr Kozyra: So you are calling for a sharing of practical resources and not necessarily a melting pot of philosophies.

Mr Cribar: No, not necessarily a melting pot of philosophies, although—

Mr Kozyra: Not necessarily, but maybe?

Mr Cribar: —there are a number of areas in which children learn where it matters not what the religious philosophy may be. Those things in that sense can be shared. I certainly have no objections to the existence of a separate school system and what it wants to teach, but as a taxpayer and as a person concerned about the welfare of the public school system, I feel that there are many areas that can be shared.

Mr Kozyra: Who do you propose should draft the common agenda in curriculum?

Mr Schwantes: There is only one curriculum. Academically speaking, should there be differences between Protestants and Catholics?

Mr Kozyra: Sure.

Mr Schwantes: Academically speaking? Normally, ethically speaking, yes.

The Vice-Chairman: Could we avoid a dialogue, Mr Kozyra? I would like an answer to the question, if you do not mind.

1430

Mr McClintock: If the will were there, the means could be found. Dianne Meaghan also wishes to speak very briefly to that.

Ms Meaghan: I want to come to this in a slightly different way. You were mentioning the things that groups cherish and I suppose that creates differences among people. There are many differences that I see in the education circles in which I travel, differences in gender, class, race, political positions as well as religion, and we do not advocate division among people based upon all these differences. In fact, it is my view that we are trying to ameliorate many of these differences. Even the private schools are going co-educational these days. The task of education, I believe, is to foster similarities and to assist with assimilation in this multicultural Ontario.

George might have mentioned the other statistic that in Canada our 28 millions will be shrinking in the future unless we begin to import people. As you may know, we have slipped below the zero population growth. The people we will be importing, according to the demographers, are people from the Third World. We will be getting more people in Canada who are nonwhite and more people who are not Protestant or Catholic. They will come with all kinds of religious backgrounds, races, creeds, etc. I hope they will feel very welcome in our public school system and in our multicultural Ontario. I hope we are building the kind of society where those people can feel there is a place for them.

Mr Jackson: George, I guess this is about the eighth brief I have received in the last five and a half years from your organization, and every time I receive one of the presentations, I always struggle to put in context exactly where your message fits in the intervening period from your last presentation. Since then, we have had significant changes.

I have a series of short questions to ask you. Again, understanding your message, I am wondering where you would put francophone education in this province, especially in light of Dianne's comments, which I am familiar with, on religious education and on matters of gender and multiculturalism. Where would you put the francophone educational rights issue in Ontario

within a framework of a unified school system and the sameness which Dianne speaks of where we have language differences and, we are told, significant cultural differences?

Mr McClintock: The unified school board concept provides a large enough umbrella to be inclusive and not exclude francophones, native peoples or the separate or public schools. There are certain basic costs that all these forms of education have to meet. They do not have to meet them in identical buildings, but surely in a jurisdiction that has francophone, separate and public boards or whatever, there would be economies of scale plus a great deal to be gained by a harmonious working arrangement that would enable the specific interests of these different groups to be met, perhaps not all at once, but I think if it were to be tried, you would find that this is a Canadian model which would serve the present and the future very well.

Mr Jackson: If I could build on that concept, when the coalition came before us on the Bill 30 hearings, your position, in rough terms, was that there should be no dual system but if there were, there should be a system that had access for all private schools so that every child would be funded in some fashion.

Then I look at your proposals on financing where, if I understand it correctly, your position is that there should be no division of industrial-commercial assessment, that there is one public system and that it should have its access preserved in terms of industrial-commercial assessment, but given the will of at least the three political parties, the government of the day, the throne speech, we will be proceeding with it.

My question to you is twofold. Do you feel that francophone educators and potentially private schools should have access to that large pool of industrial-commercial assessment, which was essentially your thesis on the Bill 30 question? Has your group given any thought to the regional concept of pooling versus a province-wide pooling which has within it some of those equality provisions which this committee is struggling with?

Do you understand the nature of my two questions?

Mr McClintock: Yes, I understand your two questions. I will answer the second one first. Very briefly, we have not gone into that last point in depth. In this presentation, we were dealing with the overarching principles as we see them.

There has been a consistency in our approach, but there has also been an evolution of our emphasis. What we presented in July 1985 has

been greatly modified by what happened with the Supreme Court since. What we are concerned about is the preservation of public education as the paramount system for the province. Whatever, by legislative or other action, may become a part of that would be governed by the same protections. If we look to a time in the future when private, francophone, Indian, Eskimo, Inuit and public school education, however it is defined, all come under one comprehensive umbrella for administration and funding, we would say yes; they all ought to be looked after by that.

At the present time, though, until public education is legislated and defined to include all that, then we say that the present basis of funding has to be preserved. We do not want to see it frittered away and alienated from the present system.

Mr Jackson: Or its equivalency in dollars. You do make reference in your brief to making sure that those dollars currently assured continue to flow, even though there are significant adjustments.

Mr McClintock: We would say they should be tied to inflation in such a way that a present-day solution or one over the next 10 years will be structured so that five or 10 generations hence there will still be the same kind of protection or compensation. In other words, we do not wish to see anything that is now available to the public system permanently alienated to it.

Mr Jackson: I know we are running out of time, but I did want to pursue the questions of pooling and its implication in an Ontario-wide model versus a regional model because I am led to believe that these hearings constitute the total amount of public input with respect to the pooling issue. Even though we do not have the legislation, we have the concept. If Yvonne is suggesting that we are going to undertake public hearings on pooling, then that is fine. I was hearing that we were not, and if she has specific knowledge in that case, then perhaps maybe later she can share it with the committee. Then you may have an opportunity to come back.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman, I have not said one thing in any way, shape or form.

Mr Jackson: You said, "That's not true."

The Vice-Chairman: Could we direct our comments through the chair, Mr Jackson? She is entitled to her opinion. It may differ from yours.

Mr Jackson: I did not interrupt anybody. I was speaking and I was interrupted, as you recall, Mr Chairman.

Mrs O'Neill: I made an aside. You have got very good ears.

Mr Jackson: Who has the floor?

The Vice-Chairman: I do, at the moment.

Mr Jackson: Very good. Thank you, and what are you recognizing?

The Vice-Chairman: I am now recognizing you, if you would finish your question and direct your comments through the chair.

1440

Mr R. F. Johnston: How about a response from the witnesses?

Mr Jackson: As you can see, we are all rather confused as to whether you will be given an opportunity to come back and respond. But I can ask you at some point, because this committee within its mandate may look at a province-wide pooling model versus a regional pooling model; it falls well within the framework of the committee's mandate, and you do make some references early in your presentation. Unless Dianne or any others have some comments, I will leave it at that.

Mr McClintock: In response, I would say we would be delighted to come back and address that item specifically in a fourth submission or nth submission, as the case may be.

The Vice-Chairman: I have Mr Neumann for a brief question, even though we are technically out of time.

Mr Neumann: In our community, the separate school board and the public school board have co-operated on a venture to build a school complex in a new area where they are sharing facilities and the management of the building. Is that the kind of think you have in mind or are you looking at abolishing that?

Mr McClintock: That is one of the possibilities. We think there are certainly many areas of the province, particularly in northern Ontario, where, again, actual shared facilities as well as shared administration and program costs mentioned make eminent sense, yes.

Mr Neumann: They are doing this with the current system. I do not see why we need to go as far as you are going. There is quite a tradition, as you know, of having the two systems. If incentives can be provided to encourage them to work more closely together, quite frankly I cannot see your position being adopted by anyone. Perhaps if you modified it to the degree of providing incentives to both—

Mr McClintock: Our position is that it should be normative, that this should be the ideal

towards which we are working and that there be encouragements and incentives to enable boards to co-operate and to unify as much of their operations as possible. We are not saying how it can be done, but we are thinking it can be.

The Vice-Chairman: Unfortunately, our time is up. I would like to thank the coalition for your presentation, your helpful suggestions to the committee and your time.

Our next group is the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. We have Jan Purvis, the president, and Sandy McPhail, a member of the board of directors, who will, I understand, be making the presentation today. Welcome to the committee. We have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation and we would like you to allow for some time for members' questions within that 30-minute time frame. Please begin by introducing yourself whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Mrs McPhail: I am Sandy McPhail and this is Jan Purvis, our president.

Mrs Purvis: I should point out that Sandy is a member of our board of directors and immediate past-president of the Etobicoke Home and School Council. I am currently holding the position and the responsibilities of the president of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations.

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations is pleased to present the following brief to the select committee on education. The future of elementary and secondary education financing is a matter of concern not only for you as members of the provincial government, but also for parents whose children are currently being served by the province's education system. Indeed, all segments of society dependent on continually emerging well-educated young people need to be concerned about the financial health of Ontario's school system.

Our home and school federation, through resolutions debated and adopted by our members at our annual meetings, represents the collective voice of some 17,000 parents from all parts of Ontario. Today, we bring to your attention their collective views and concerns about equity and accountability in education financing and the adequacy of operating and capital finances.

First of all, under the general heading of equity, more specifically the recognized ordinary expenditure per pupil, earlier in the year the Ministry of Education outlined its new funding

model for education and in that document pointed out that the per-pupil grants paid to school boards constitute the principal way in which equity among school boards is achieved. This mechanism to achieve equity of financial resources and equity of tax burden is certainly laudable.

However, one glaring inequity within these per-pupil grants still exists. In 1989, the expenditure for elementary students was set at \$3,235 and the expenditure for secondary students was set at \$4,122, a difference of \$887. Since 1977, our members have maintained that this long-standing disparity in funding is no longer valid in the Ontario system.

Studies suggest that activity-based programs, individualized instruction for special-needs students and support services for students experiencing family problems, all delivered in the early years of a child's education, will result in substantial savings to the education system at the secondary level and to society in general. This alone is sufficient reason to eliminate the gap in the per-pupil grants for elementary and secondary students.

We therefore recommend that the recognized ordinary expenditure for elementary students be increased substantially so that the needs of elementary students are met more effectively.

Under equity between the public and separate school systems, the implementation of Bill 30 is now virtually completed and we feel reasonably assured that this extension of funding to the separate school system has not occurred at the expense of the public system. We reiterate, however, our 1985 position that the provincial government, having made the political decision to establish two publicly funded education systems, must provide funds to adequately meet the needs of both systems.

This leads to a second recommendation: that the provincial government, having established two publicly funded education systems, must provide adequate funding to meet the needs of these two systems.

The recently announced mechanism to pool commercial and industrial real estate taxes at the local level and the supporting data released by the Ministry of Education seem to indicate even further the ministry's desire to establish equity between the school systems without placing the public system at a disadvantage. Any movement towards provincial pooling of commercial and real estate taxes, however, is strenuously opposed by our members. Locally raised tax dollars must remain in the local jurisdiction.

This leads to a third recommendation: that the provincial government not consider any programs which would institute the provincial pooling of locally raised commercial and industrial tax revenues.

Both the public and separate school systems now receive funding from two sources: local ratepayer-directed tax dollars and provincial moneys collected through personal income tax. The public system is obligated to provide educational services for all children without distinction, and that raises the question, is the separate school system equally obligated?

Under the general heading with regard to private schools, the provincial government, in establishing two parallel school systems, has taken on an almost overwhelming financial burden. To consider fragmenting the provincial education budget further by funding private education enterprises would, in our view, be irresponsible. We believe that private schools have their place in society; we also believe that parents who choose a private education for their children must accept the responsibility of paying for this alternative. The public school system is accessible to all children. Private schools, however, limit admissions in many different ways and are under no obligation to serve all children.

That raises the fourth recommendation: that no publicly raised tax dollars be used to support private or independent schools.

Under French programs, since 1974 our federation has been urging the Ministry of Education to extend the core French program to the kindergarten level. Currently, core French is mandatory for grades 4 to 8. We also support the introduction of immersion programs by many school boards in response to the local needs of the community. We note that special initiatives grants are available to boards which extend their education services beyond the regular program and we feel that this additional funding helps avoid any detrimental effects that French programs may have on the board's budget for its regular programs.

That brings forward the fifth recommendation, that school boards' expenditures associated with core French and immersion programs continue to be eligible for special initiative grants.

1450

Mrs McPhail: Equity and destreaming and integration: The current educational trends to destream and integrate are advantageous in many ways for students. On the other hand, these practices raise questions. For example, will class

sizes be reduced to accommodate the wider range of student abilities in destreamed classes? Will the emotional wellbeing of integrated students, particularly those with severe disabilities, become a difficulty?

While school boards receive grant moneys for special education, we wonder if these financial resources are sufficient to adequately and equally meet the needs of the average students and the exceptional students, all in the same classes.

This leads to the recommendation that the financial resources necessary to educate the average child not be eroded by the costs associated with integration and destreaming.

Under the heading, "Accountability," on the provincial share of education costs, the cost of education in Ontario is currently shared by the provincial government through its various revenue sources and by the local school boards from taxation on real estate. This division in the financing of education leaves both the provincial government and the local school board accountable for these expenditures, and our members feel that this dual accountability is necessary.

However, the recent trend in which the province's share of the board budgets has declined is not acceptable to our members and we urge the government to return to its previous 55 to 60 per cent level of financial support to school boards.

Therefore, we recommend that the provincial government's share of local school board budgets return to the 55 to 60 per cent level.

Under the heading "School Board Debts": Politicians, whether members of Parliament or trustees, are wise to remember that taxpayers view massive debt loads with a critical eye and are unimpressed when they see large portions of their tax dollars going towards interest payments on debts. The adjustments in the mechanisms by which school boards can finance capital costs, for example lot levies, concern our members. The federal and provincial governments are already plagued by unacceptable debt loads. We do not want to see the same situation develop at the local school board level.

Therefore, we recommend that the provincial government closely monitor the debt load of school boards to ensure that unacceptable debt loads do not develop at the local school board level.

Under "Noneducation Role of Schools": Increasingly, schools are being expected to assume more than just an educational role in society. Custodial care, social work and health care, for example, are now included in the school's daily

functions and we wonder why government ministries other than Education are not accepting financial responsibility for these added roles.

Therefore, we recommend that the ministries of Health and Community and Social Services accept greater financial responsibility for non-education school functions.

Under "Duplication of Services": The provincial government decided in 1984 to fully fund two education systems in the province. Our federation is alarmed by the duplication of services in education that this division has created and we continue to support the formation of one publicly funded school system in Ontario.

We recommend that the provincial government move towards a policy that would implement one publicly funded school system in Ontario.

A unified public and separate school system would result in financial savings in several areas, for example, board and administrative staff, offices and equipment, tendering and purchasing for supplies and equipment, storage and delivery of supplies, busing and specialized programs like technical education, and would ultimately result in the province's education dollars stretching further.

Therefore, we recommend that the provincial government consider implementing incentive grants to encourage school jurisdictions to form amalgamated or unified school boards.

Mrs Purvis: Under the general heading "Adequacy," and more specifically with regard to learning materials, the cost of education is enormous, as all of us have realized. This necessary, well-placed expenditure of public funds results, however, in one of the finest education systems in the country. Our federation has stated this many times. Nevertheless, shortfalls in funding arise from time to time in education financing and our members have identified some of these areas.

The availability of up-to-date textbooks and learning materials is an ongoing concern for parents and school boards. Equipment required for technical education, some business courses and science courses needs to be replaced frequently to keep abreast of current technologies. New curricula often require special learning materials and supplies. Especially for provincially mandated programs, provincial financial assistance is necessary.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education continue to include initiative grants in its budget to assist school boards with the implementation of provincially mandated programs.

With regard to accommodation, in many parts of Ontario the need for new schools and renovations or replacements of older buildings has far exceeded the province's process for financing these capital expenditures. As a consequence, thousands of school children are being accommodated in portable classrooms, a situation decidedly unappealing for students and their parents.

The recent government initiative to limit enrolment in grades 1 and 2 to 20 students is an initiative our federation strongly supports. It is a situation, however, that worsens the accommodation problems in many areas.

We recommend that in the future the Ministry of Education ensure that class size initiatives are more clearly co-ordinated with the appropriate capital funding to school boards.

In previous years, when the Ministry of Education fully met a school board's accommodation needs, an inadequacy still existed between the Ministry of Education's criteria for new pupil places and the reality faced by the school board in providing accommodation for students. This discrepancy existed as well when the capacity of an existing school was being assessed.

Does this discrepancy still exist? In approving capital grants for new schools, does the Ministry of Education recognize and acknowledge, for example, the mandated class sizes for grades 1 and 2, the requirement to provide junior kindergarten and full-day kindergarten classes and the limited enrolment in self-contained special education classes?

Our federation recommends that the Ministry of Education's criteria for new pupil places more closely match the class sizes mandated and/or expected by the Ministry of Education.

In conclusion, the Minister of Education has stated that the government intends to provide equality of opportunity for every child in this province. Our federation agrees that all children in Ontario should have equal access to the resources and opportunities offered by our educational system. We reiterate, however, that the provincial government, in mandating this vision, must accept greater financial responsibility for its implementation. We further request that any changes in the educational system be made only after full consideration is given to the best for each child.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Mrs O'Neill: I thank you very much for your brief. I am very happy that your counterparts in the separate school system have been here to hear

your brief as well. I think there is a lot of very positive feedback to our government's initiatives. There are certainly some areas you want us to keep working on, which is only natural.

As you may know, I still consider the parents as the prime educators. I am very proud of your brief, having started my own little public world in the very same place you are. I have a very soft spot for people who hold the positions you are holding.

I particularly like your comments about provincial pooling, because we have certainly heard much from many others in a different vein. I am happy to hear what you have to say about that and I am very happy to hear you say that you do not feel that the extension has been at the jeopardy of the public school system. For you to say that has a great deal of credibility.

I am wondering how much knowledge you have of the incentive grants that are being given for some of the programs we are putting forward, the primary class size being one that is maybe getting a little more press than the others, such as textbooks and junior science programs. These are there for the offing in many areas and I feel that there has maybe been some lack of attention, that there is some funding going towards developing those programs.

I feel that the initiatives you suggest regarding sharing of administrative structures are certainly very good for all of us to think about, and in many areas, when we travel we are hearing that is happening. There are joint board offices being developed in some parts of this province. Transportation is being looked at very seriously for sharing. I would just encourage you, with your members, to continue to ask the boards you are in touch with on a daily basis to think of ways of economizing and to give the best use of our resources for each of the children in this province.

That was more comment than question, I know, Mr Chairman.

1500

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, and now for something totally different: Mr Johnston has a question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Unless they want to respond. Do you have a response you want to make?

Mrs Purvis: What can I say?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I also appreciated the brief very much. It is very useful for us and a with number of the things you point to, such as the dangers in destreaming without the sort of

support services this committee talked about putting into place, the points are very well taken, as are most of your others. They come from the practical experience of parents so it is not surprising.

One of the great ironies, though, of those who are always promoting a unified system is that you also want the local board structure and the local ratepayer structure to exist. Constitutionally, it is very difficult to see how a unified system can be imposed, frankly, on a ratepayer system that is based on sectarian division. There have been several challenges already on that basis in the past, all of which have been won by the minority side, which wants the right to run its own system if it is based on that premise.

Therefore, in some ways, I think those two philosophies are at odds. You can go a total provincial way of dealing with things. Then you give your money out on a per-student basis across the province and you can have one administration of that. But to move with the system we have or just to tinker with it a bit, it is very difficult to use the unified system you are talking about. I wondered if you had that kind of debate in your group.

Mrs Purvis: I recognize that dichotomy in coming at the same question and by no means do I have all the answers, nor do I think does anybody.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Not at this table anyway.

Mrs Purvis: However, I think one of my perceptions of this particular situation comes from this basis: I believe that in the public systems as they exist right now, there is a tremendous degree of diversity within those public systems, that they are delivering programs from a wide range. You have one school board that is administering a school that deals only with adults. You have other schools within that same jurisdiction that are dealing only with French students. You have other schools in that same jurisdiction that are dealing with a dual-track situation, where you have English programs and French immersion programs coexisting.

Just on the basis of the ability of the systems to accommodate that range of diversity already, I would like to think, and I have a certain amount of faith, that it could also extend to accommodating within one system a diversity that also incorporates the cultural and religious types of differences. Your point is well taken. How that would ever actually mechanically work, I am not sure, but I fully believe that is something our society should continue to work towards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the reality, though, just as a comment on this from my perspective, is that even Bill 109, where we established the board in Ottawa, in my view could be subject to an appeal at the Supreme Court level on the basis that having panels within a board is not equivalent to having the right to run your own board. At the moment, nobody is proposing that kind of challenge and thank God we are not going through all that again, but that is the difficulty with it.

If people are not willing to come to grips with that larger question of a total reorganization of the finances to enable that, I am therefore wondering whether it would not be very helpful for us as a committee if groups like yours actually put your minds to some of the functional co-operation that we could both enable and encourage the two systems to co-operate on, rather than be looking at that constitutionally very dangerous notion of a unified board.

I mean, there are some obvious things like transportation, but any analysis that came from your kind of practical experience as parents around how that co-operation on a local level could really cut down the bureaucracy and make it more efficient is the kind of thing that it is possible to do in an encouragement kind of fashion between the two systems. I think that would be something we would really welcome hearing from your perspective.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman, just on that point, Richard got my mind working.

The Vice-Chairman: Oh, we will have a talk with Richard later.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Who would have believed it?

The Vice-Chairman: That is going to be in his next householder.

Mr Kozyra: Call it the miracle worker.

The Vice-Chairman: That man who woke up the—

Mrs O'Neill: I wonder if it would be possible for the ministry—it must have it because there is encouragement already out there and this came out of Bill 30—to give us a list of all the ways in which boards co-operate. I think each of us could likely name 10, but it would be kind of neat to have all of these on one piece of paper for ourselves.

The Vice-Chairman: Leon, can you compile such a list?

Interjection: Manual for co-operation.

The Vice-Chairman: You would doubt it?

Mr Brumer: I would doubt it.

The Vice-Chairman: Why do you not try?

Mrs O'Neill: Especially now that you have my mind working.

Mr Brumer: We can check through the regional offices. A lot of these kinds of co-operations are done between the boards and have little or nothing to do with the ministry.

The Vice-Chairman: Well, I do not think we want to create a task force to look into it.

Mrs O'Neill: No, we do not.

The Vice-Chairman: Maybe we should more appropriately talk about that when we get down to writing our report. We can look at some areas.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think Leon is right, that they are coming up with something concrete at this stage and any kind of system-wide basis would be very difficult to do. But if at a later date there could be the accumulation of data on what co-operations are working, where they are working and why they are not system-wide, it would be a fascinating thing for us to be able to do some more work on. I am really glad things are kind of moving over there.

The Vice-Chairman: Having regained control of this meeting, I will go to Mr Jackson.

Mr Jackson: I too appreciate the brief and I appreciate the genesis of each of the recommendations, given that they represent individual resolutions from actual home and school associations. The actual full resolutions are very interesting reading and I recommend all members to try and look at that.

I have two areas I want to look at and pursue with you. One is recommendation 6, which fascinates me and I am pleased to see it. I think it is spot-on with respect to financial resources, accountability and so on.

However, a theme within your brief that I saw missing was the notion of consultation. I understand this recommendation came from W. H. Morden school, which is in Halton region, and I understand Halton region is doing its analysis and implementation of destreaming without any parental involvement. Were you aware of that and do you have any further recommendations?

I know that for this very reason, in Durham the parental component, Pauline Laing, was most insistent we have parental involvement to monitor the fact that we do not want yet another provincial initiative coming at the detriment of other students in the system. Within almost like a conspiracy of educators, that can occur, but when you put parents and natural advocates in

that environment, there is pressure to declare that in fact this is an inappropriate use of resources.

The objective may be fine, but it is the manner in which the board is going about implementing it. Perhaps I could get some reaction. You might have some stronger recommendation with respect to that, because I certainly would like to see parental involvement on matters as significant as implementing destreaming.

Mrs Purvis: Probably since the home and school federation began to exist, the idea of consultation with parents has been uppermost and kind of a general operating principle. With respect to this particular issue, I think what we were addressing here was strictly the financial aspects of it. If you want to incorporate the idea of parental involvement too, that is obviously going to be a board-by-board decision. I am delighted that—

Mr Jackson: Why would it be a board-by-board decision? In our first two reports, we made rather extensive supportive statements on the notion of the principles of community-based activities in our schools, embracing parents as equal participants in a lot of activities in terms of advising schools, and yet boards could make the decision not to have parents on committees, even small advisory committees. I am not saying it should be disproportionate, but for God's sake, even one parent.

For example, on the implementation of what you referred to earlier, the differentiated pupil-teacher ratio in the primary division, we are hearing cases of boards where they are increasing class sizes in other grade levels as a means of dealing with the fiscal elements. You can take the fiscal approach, but I suspect that if there were trustees who were as committed to certain principles as others, they might articulate that should not happen, the funds would be found or the political will would be there to articulate what was going wrong. I just worry that we are running into that with destreaming because home and school associations are reluctant to suggest that there should be parental involvement on these committees.

1510

Mrs Purvis: I do not think that the home and school federation is reluctant to suggest it. I think at local levels that kind of ongoing request for parent representation takes place. Whether in fact it is always acted upon, of course, is another matter altogether.

With regard to the destreaming issue particularly, I am not sure that were it the wish of the government and the Ministry of Education that

this be implemented in schools with parent involvement in the local discussions—it would have been, I think, much better had that been indicated right from the beginning. I think we have got a little bit of a situation which comes up from time to time where there is a statement coming from the Ministry of Education that, "This is what is going to happen, the point, the decision has been made and you simply get on with it rather than then spend a lot of time at the local level probably going around the same arguments again."

Mr Jackson: I do not want you to protract this, but it depends on whether you see parents as simply a consultative necessity, a sort of procedure you want to get out of the way when you have got sufficient time, or you see them as an integrated part, an added resource to assist trustees who cannot be on every committee, on every activity in a board's jurisdiction. I will be asking Mr Trbovich tomorrow for a copy of the memo which specifically sets out what he asked school boards to do on behalf of the minister.

I will be anxious to find out if parental involvement is passed over, if the ministry sees that as, "Well, if we've got two years, then we'll consult." Well, two years is what we do have. "If we have three years we'll consult, but if we have two years we'd better let the educators deal with all these matters."

To me, it is a serious point. I would hate to see any level of government, whether trustees, the provincial government or any political party, pay lipservice to the notion of where parents belong in the educational loop. That is why, Jan, given that it is your own jurisdiction, it is one of your own home and schools, your own recommendation in our own backyard, I would rather see on the record something with more clarity on the issue of consultation.

You do indicate, "Give us more time with some of these announcements, cost them out more effectively," but surely at the implementation stage the parents provide added balance and support for the child's best interests, and the taxpayers' for that matter, as opposed to what invariably ends up being a decision which really is not as well known and publicized in the community in terms of the impact. It is a unique recommendation, we are not seeing very much of it and I appreciate it very much that you brought it forward.

The Vice-Chairman: I would also like to thank you for taking the time to come and share your thoughts with us. They have been very helpful.

Our next presenter today is the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario, represented by Michael Monk, Angela Smith, Gunther Schroder and Martha Schroder. If you could come forward and please identify yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, we have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation, and hopefully that will include some time for questions from committee members. Begin whenever you are ready.

FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Mr Monk: My name is Michael Monk. On my right is Angela Smith. This is Gunther Schroder and Martha Schroder, and the last names are the same for a specific reason, so you can assume.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is a causal relationship.

Mr Monk: There is a causal relationship. Before I get going, I would like to read through the brief. It is not terribly long, but we have deliberately kept it general and more philosophical in nature rather than spouting numbers and delivering a whole bunch of ratios and proportions and so on and so forth. We have tried to keep it fairly general and just give a sense of what some of our groups and associations across the province feel.

By way of introduction, our federation is a group of active Catholic parent-teacher associations across the province and we are pleased to have this opportunity to address this select committee. As parents of children attending Catholic schools and taxpayers of Ontario, we have a deep personal interest in the topic of educational finance and how these finances affect the education of our children.

I might point out that Ms Smith and myself are also educators as we are principals of an elementary and a secondary school. Mr Schroder is a police officer in Metropolitan Toronto and Mrs Schroder is a nurse.

In this brief we hope to address the concerns regarding equity, accountability and adequacy with respect to the financing of education across the province.

Catholic parents of Ontario have historically struggled for the educational rights of their children. We now have a publicly funded system going from junior kindergarten to grade 12 OAC, which will allow our children to attend a Catholic school for their entire public school career. Our community has therefore seen a significant population increase in our schools and a resultant need for facilities and services to accommodate

this growth. Our school boards have been struggling to cope with this growth and in most cases the resources, financial in nature, have just not been available to meet the demands and expectations of our parents across the province. This inability of Catholic school boards to meet the needs of their growing populations, along with some apparent inequities with some coterminous public boards in terms of funding, has created a sense of frustration with some of the members of our organization.

However, from recent government initiatives there is a general sense that some progress has been made towards establishing the equality of educational opportunities, but there remains some significant hurdles to overcome, we feel.

With reference to equity, we use as an example families perhaps living across the street from one another whose children both attend publicly funded schools of different boards. The concern of parents from both school systems would be that their child is receiving the same educational opportunity as their neighbour's child across the street or down the road. Each of our children should be provided with the opportunity to attain their maximum potential within the educational guidelines as established by the Ministry of Education.

School boards across the province, under the guidance of their trustees, do their very best to meet the needs of their student population by providing them with these educational opportunities. However, either because of geographical location, meaning rural boards, etc, or local board wealth, this equity, so often espoused, simply does not exist. In particular, to use an example, the Metropolitan Toronto School Board has much greater access to commercial assessment than would a rural board from other areas of Ontario. These "rich" boards across the province can therefore provide more resources to their students with a resultant discrepancy in the provision of those equal educational opportunities when compared to other less fortunate boards. Often, it is the parents of children in these less fortunate, but none the less public, boards who must shoulder an increased tax burden to provide some approximation of equality.

It is the feeling of Catholic parents across the province that there exists an inequality with respect to the financing of education across the province. The disparity of access to commercial assessment and the over ceiling expenditures of some rich boards have created a bit of a chasm between the rich and poor boards.

Without a doubt, Catholic parents feel they are on the poor side of this equation and expect the government to assist in alleviating this situation. One in no way wishes to foster a sense of Robin Hood, of stealing from the rich to give to the poor, but rather, we should progress to a state where all students across the province have similar educational opportunities.

The sense of adequacy with respect to the provision of educational financing can only be judged in the context of whether resources provided are meeting the needs of the children, as perceived by their parents. Are our children getting what they need from the educational system? Is our board, or our government, providing sufficient financial resources to allow teachers to meet the educational objectives of programs required by the school boards and the Ministry of Education. Are we perhaps asking too much of schools these days with respect to these levels of service and the demands these services place on our resources?

1520

It appears that no matter how many times we divide up the financial pie, there never seems to be enough to satisfy everyone's needs. The list of concerns like lack of facilities, portable classrooms, split grades, day care, transportation and junior kindergarten seems never ending. The list must also include the cost of implementing new programs such as drug education, AIDS awareness, all-day kindergarten and new initiatives from various areas of curricula. Catholic parents have the impression that there is not sufficient funds to meet their expectations of the educational system. Again, are we asking too much of the schools? Should school boards, officials from the Ministry of Education and other involved parties come to a sense of what can realistically be provided throughout the entire province with some degree of equity and adequacy? Must we find a way of baking a larger financial pie or must we all go on some form of diet?

The concept of accountability is defined in Webster's dictionary as the quality or state of being accountable, liable or responsible. As parents and taxpayers we see government officials, school board trustees and officers as being the responsible parties who are accountable for the collection and distribution of the educational financial resources for our province. Accountability would indicate that these officials are acting on behalf of the taxpayers and parents and are providing an effective and efficient use of the resources at their disposal.

While graphs and spreadsheets are often used by officials to outline the balance or imbalance of revenue and expenditures, the greater concern of parents relates to the more philosophical approach of where we are going and what we want to do with our educational system. Does accountability refer to the consultation of the three major parties; governments, school boards and parents, when new programs and initiatives, and therefore costs, are introduced. Responsible allocation of financial resources on a province-wide basis must involve a clearly outlined set of expectations and a framework to meet these expectations.

At present, on a province-wide basis, these expectations are not clearly defined or well defined and the framework requires some alterations. Our federation believes that committees, such as this select committee, are an important step in the right direction, allowing us to attain financial accountability, equity and perhaps even adequacy for all the children of the province.

In conclusion, this discussion on these aspects of educational financing will bring out some of the concerns of Catholic parents across the province. The graphs and statistics have been left for the ministry officials. They are the best equipped to present those figures to you.

There is a need for greater equity of educational opportunity and financial resources to provide these opportunities to children all across the province.

The supply of funds will probably never be adequate given the current demands on the educational system. We must very carefully look at our philosophical objectives with respect to the needs and expectations of our educational system.

The accountability of the government, school boards and parents in the funding of schools will depend on how well we meet these objectives, needs and expectations.

As an association of parents and teachers, we are pleased to have had an opportunity to address this committee and present some of our concerns. We feel it is the duty of Catholic parent-teacher associations to contribute as much as we can to our local schools and, through our federation, to the government of Ontario. We also then become part of the accountability equation and partners in the education of the children of Ontario.

FCPTAO would like to thank you for your invitation to participate in this discussion and invites the committee to further dialogue with our association and its members.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We have questions.

Mr Kozyra: I observed that some if not all of you were present for the presentation by the Coalition for Public Education. I am sure all of you are familiar with their basic philosophy and the things they call for, this unification of school boards and so on. I would like to pursue that from your perspective.

Mr Monk: The Coalition for Public Education, we were not present at that particular presentation. I have never heard of it.

Mrs O'Neill: They were immediately preceding the federation of parents that you just heard, but you were not here for that.

Mr Monk: No, we were not here. There was the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations directly before us. Is that what you are referring to? I am sorry. Maybe I am getting your groups mixed up.

The Vice-Chairman: Perhaps you could form a question that would be directed towards their presentation.

Mr Kozyra: I was going to.

One of the basic statements or principles they espouse under the rationale of cost-effectiveness is unification of school boards and sharing and so on. I would like you to comment on that from your perspective. They outlined a whole series of advantages, many of them relating to cost-effectiveness. I guess in the most innocuous or beneficial sense, you could point to that cost-effectiveness.

On the other range of the spectrum, that umbrella of unification they point to could be inverted and become the melting pot of unification. I am wondering if you would comment on that, the calls for this type of approach, first sharing of facilities and resources between school boards, and where you see the disadvantages. The advantages, from their side, have been outlined. Where would you see disadvantages to this kind of approach?

Mr Monk: We can start at a very local level. Mrs Schroder, do you want to relate your experience of where two boards and, I would say, two local communities, have worked together on a very common but very localized problem? Then I will give some other examples.

Mrs Schroder: Actually, this had nothing to do with finances, but I think the co-operation of different schools in the two publicly funded systems already goes on.

There was a concern in our community recently where a restaurant was going to put in a

drive-through. This particular restaurant is situated within 500 metres of both the Catholic and the public school. So our two parent-teacher associations got together and we presented a brief, in fact, to the city of Etobicoke, arguing the reasons that we felt this was quite unsafe. Because this restaurant conformed to the bylaws, they told us there was nothing we could do.

Again, we went to the headquarters of this restaurant and appealed to it, as schools in the area, to consider not putting in a drive-through at this particular restaurant. They said that actually we were not their customers and they did not have to worry about us, that our concerns were not their concerns. They were in the business of making money and this was going to make them money.

I talked to the person from the home and school association and I said: "In fact, our school uses this restaurant two days a year to have certain days. I am going back to my school and say we will not use this restaurant any more." She said, "I am going back to my school," and the same thing. You can see we do co-operate. In fact, their school holds a fun fair one year and we hold it the next. So, this co-operation, not in terms of financing, already goes on.

Bigger is not better. I cannot imagine the size of one huge school board. How would they be accountable? I know where to go now, to my Catholic trustee, when I have a concern in my school. I do not know that having one huge umbrella group would make my concerns as a parent heard any better. I do not think so. Yet there are areas, as I say, where we co-operate very effectively on a community level.

Ms Smith: I think there is an identity we want to maintain ourselves as a Catholic school system. Our philosophy is for the whole child, for the spiritual development of the child, as well as for the academic, the physical and the emotional development.

Mr Monk: To give a more global response, in the transition after post-1984, when there was some sharing of facilities going on, I was lucky enough to be in a high school where we shared a building with the public board, for at least the period of a year, anyway. That in itself proved to be fruitful to both staffs involved and the students in both communities.

There are a number of instances where there are services purchased from one board by another. They might be available in one and not available in the other. There is the economy of scale by the fact that both boards can get access.

That is a fairly common thing done throughout boards on a local level.

Provincially speaking, I think I would have some concerns, but I do not know if I could address them all right now.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is nice to see you again, Mike. I am glad that you could represent the parent-teachers again.

I cannot remember from the last presentation—sorry, these things slip away. What percentage of your schools have an association of this sort now? Have you any idea?

Mr Monk: We have two types of members. Are you referring to associate membership or full PTAs involved actively that are really humming?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Let's start with the hummers and move on.

1530

Mr Monk: Hummers would be about 220, somewhere in that area, that are really active PTAs. We are looking at perhaps, out of 1,200 schools, indirectly over 1,000 schools involved in receiving and participating. We have our annual convention coming up in approximately a month's time. There will be delegates from all the schools invited to come. We expect well over 300 delegates are coming.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So here we have Etobicoke, I gather, Marrocco.

Mr Monk: Downtown. That is correct.

Ms Smith: St Clement's.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is the sort of voter turnout that we are getting for electing Catholic trustees these days in your jurisdictions? Do you know what it is ranging at just offhand?

Mr Monk: You have got me there, Richard. I really could not tell you. You are referring, since we are all involved with the Metropolitan Separate School Board here in Toronto—

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is all MSSB.

Mr Monk: It is all MSSB. I really could not tell you.

Mrs Schroder: Our trustee was acclaimed the last time so it was really difficult to tell.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is another factor because there seems to have been, during the recent last number of years, a high number of acclamations. I guess what I am trying to come to is a sort of accountability question because it seems to me that the PTAs, in both systems, represent a very small minority of parents these days.

There are generalizations one can make about parental involvement, starting off very strong in

the early elementary panel and then sort of disappearing by the time we get to the high school panel often. These are not always accurate. There is a very low turnout in the elections. We have a very confused financial accountability system at the moment. You say you know how to go to your trustee, but to find out who is responsible for things is a very tough thing to do within the systems at the moment. I wonder if you have any questions about that larger problem that a province-wide PTA has in trying to just represent the full parent-teacher population out there.

Mr Monk: Actually, if I may just comment on that, I see that very problem as being a cause for the resurgence of PTAs. What has happened is that there has been, with the development of large boards and so on and so forth, a certain amount of, shall I say, bureaucracy and frustration. Sometimes the trustees and the parent-teacher groups are finding now that they are a little bit, how shall I say, more influential in trying to get things done for their own local communities. They have specific needs for a specific community. They are not very reserved about raising a ruckus if they feel that there is a problem. That is why in recent years, I have found a resurgence of PTAs specifically because of, in some ways, the frustrations of not being able to deal with large board bureaucracies, etc.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you have any analysis of that? I mean we have a series of very bizarre things like closed meetings of board committees and things like that which take place in both systems. We have real difficulty getting information. We have heard from directors. Board members have been complaining about not being able to get any information from directors of education from time to time.

It seems to me that we really need some kind of analysis of what it is like to be a parent or a parent-teacher association and trying to access information or exert power and influence within the system. I am wondering if you have ever tried to highlight those areas of frustration that make it difficult to get the accountability that should be yours.

Mr Monk: It is very interesting. I mean the focus and theme of our upcoming convention is communication of Catholic parents specifically with boards and trustees and government levels. That is certainly something we intend to address. I do not know that we have ever really measured it. We have encountered the frustration that parents have run into in trying to get an answer to a specific problem. It could be anything from

split grade to transportation of a handicapped child. All those types of situations have arisen.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would be very interesting if out of your meeting you get suggestions or proposals. I think we would be interested in hearing them.

Mrs Schroder: I think, Mr Johnston, that we will certainly get some suggestions. They tend to be a very vocal group. I do not think we will have any problems there.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Great, thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. I would like to thank the federation too for its presentation and taking the time to come before the committee today. It has been very helpful.

The next delegation is the Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology. The president, Douglas Auld, is with us this afternoon. Welcome. We have set aside 30 minutes for your presentation, which should include time for questions from the committee. I invite you to begin whenever you are ready.

LOYALIST COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr Auld: For the past 20 years, I have been involved in one way or another in primary, secondary, university and now college education, and it pleases me to see the select committee taking a look at the topic of financing education. While there are a lot of other major issues right now involving education—the quality of education and Canada's competitiveness in education with the rest of the world—as important as these are, I asked to speak to this committee today about one issue, and that was the question of fairness and justice in the financing of education and how that relates to the quality of education received by each student.

I would ask you to consider three questions. First, should each student at the primary and secondary level of education have the same amount of resources devoted to his or her education regardless of where he or she lives, taking into account any special needs or circumstances? Second, should every student in Ontario be guaranteed that resources are equally available for his or her education up to a certain level, with any expenditure beyond that level depending upon the wealth of the individual community wherein the student resides? Third, should the per-student financial and real resources devoted to education depend entirely upon local decisions and local wealth regarding education?

If you agreed with the second question, then to some extent you accept the current system of

financing primary and secondary education in Ontario. As you know, the province will provide resources to raise expenditures to a certain level on a per-pupil basis and ensure that there is no undue local tax burden from doing so. Expenditure per pupil beyond that level is not supported by provincial funding in a general sense, and therefore any additional expenditure will depend upon local household or per-student assessment.

The concept of wealth neutrality, which has received a lot of attention in the United States over the last few years, in terms of education finance states that there ought not to be any relationship between per-pupil expenditure and per-pupil wealth or income in a given community. There may be differences in per-pupil expenditures among communities, but those differences should not have any relationship to how much wealth there is in the community. They would rather reflect local preferences for education.

If you answered yes to the first question, that expenditure or the resources per pupil should be identical across the province regardless of where the student lives, except for special circumstances, then you support the notion of what is referred to as categorical equity. Simply put, categorical equity says that there are some expenditures or services that are so important in the long term for the wellbeing of the province that the resources devoted to those should be identical throughout the province. In short, there is no room for local decision-making in terms of how many property tax dollars should be allocated to education.

Now, the current system that we operate within the province of Ontario provides for what I call limited wealth neutrality in that, up to a certain level of expenditure, the province provides funds in the form of equalization grants to school boards to ensure that there is no undue tax burden. The problem, however, arises with respect to expenditures beyond that level.

In a wealthy community, that is, one with a high per-student or per capita assessment base, it is much easier in terms of the tax burden to raise an additional \$100 per student for education than it is for a community that has a very low per capita tax base. It means that students who live in a wealthy community have, on average, a better chance of receiving a little more resources for education than the students who live in the less wealthy communities.

It should also be remembered that there is nothing to compel any school board to meet a particular recognized level of expenditure, al-

though there are certain social pressures and financial incentives to do so. Does the system itself create inequities? Is it an unfair method of financing education? Does it have anything to do with the debate over the general quality of education in Ontario?

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I cannot answer the last question, but I am concerned that there may be significant inequities in our system of education finance because of the way the financial system works today. While it would be easy perhaps for some people to move to a system of categorical equity whereby the province simply provided identical funding per student for all school boards across the province, such a move would naturally result in a considerable loss of autonomy on the part of the elected school boards in Ontario.

A change in this direction is not as radical as it might appear to be at first in light of what is happening in other jurisdictions in Canada and, for that matter, in other parts of the world. In some Canadian provinces, in Australian states, in Europe and in the United States, the trend over the last decade or two has been towards a greater emphasis on equal financial resources on a per-pupil basis and less local autonomy with regard to expenditure levels.

That does not mean that there is no role for school boards; far from it. As a past trustee myself on the Wellington County Board of Education, I can assure you that there are many local issues, many school board issues separate from those dealing strictly with the budget that would keep school boards extremely busy. In fact, removing some of the financial issues that tend to dominate boards from time to time would perhaps free up considerable time for boards to look at the really important issues, such as curriculum development, human resource management for teachers and staff and long-term facilities planning.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention to the paper that I prepared for the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education, where I demonstrated in a quantitative statistical sense that the Ontario system of funding education is not wealth-neutral and, of course, is far from achieving the principle of categorical equity.

In my view, the issue is an extremely important one and deserves careful attention by this committee. School boards are rightly proud of the role they have played in their communities and believe that they are acting certainly in the best interests of local residents, whose tax base

they will be attacking for education dollars every year.

If the current system is to remain, that is, if we are to keep the status quo, then I believe the committee must be satisfied to support the following statement: It is fair and equitable that students in primary and secondary schools may receive a higher level of resources devoted to their education if they live in a wealthy community compared to students who live in a less wealthy community.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. Questions from Mr Keyes.

Mr Keyes: Thank you very much, Mr Auld. I appreciate the brevity of the brief and some of the direction it gives me.

One of the problems that I have had since starting this round of negotiations, just having moved from two years as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, is that I look at that as a social—I use the wrong term here perhaps—but as a social benefit that is open to every person regardless of location in the province, his wealth and everything else.

We are now dealing with the education system, where we are trying, in a sense, to provide that same goal for children. Regardless of where they live, regardless of the ability of the community to pay, we are trying to give them an equal educational opportunity. If we are going to try to move in that direction, we have to be sure we do not fall into some of the troubled areas we found in the field of health, such as the escalation of health costs, at least 10 per cent every year. It has grown to the point of a third of our budget. If we do not learn from that lesson as we try to move towards more adequate and equitable financing in education, we could find ourselves in the same way.

I do not know just how you can come to wealth neutrality. I can agree with you that would seem to be the ultimate goal to reach, but how do we get there? If you try to take the province and pay 100 per cent of the cost of education, then you have the accountability role that Mr Johnston will want answered as to how boards fulfil an accountability role in the system if not only were the province to pay 100 per cent of the costs but it would almost be expected to set the services provided, much as we do in health care.

You have not touched yet on whether you support province-wide pooling of commercial-industrial assessment so that we would then get wealth neutrality. Some groups have worked on both sides of that issue, even in today's presentation. Some want the pooling between

boards, but it must be only coterminous boards, and some have even said, "Pool it, but across the province so that we all get a share." I do not see that you have really touched on those. I want you to expand on those views a bit.

Mr Auld: If I could draw a parallel with the system of financing that your province is currently using in the colleges and universities, there is a per-student grant, a tuition fee, which is basically established with the blessing of the province. If you looked across the province, notwithstanding the research part of the universities, the per-student funding for education, for teaching, for learning in the college or the university system, would be a lot closer to categorical equity than would be primary and secondary education.

So my question to you is, why do you accept it in one part of the education system and not in the other part, notwithstanding the fact that the school boards are elected officials and the college governors and boards of governors of universities are, to a large extent, appointed officials? I realize there is a difference there, but the province is much closer in its post-secondary funding to the concept of complete equality of access to education than it is in the primary and secondary level.

Mr Keyes: One of the major differences is the tuition aspect, which you have referred to, and we provide an educational system without any tuition attached to it whatsoever, other than by virtue of paying property tax. Unless we try to take those same dollars from all the taxpayers and bring it all to the province and then put it out in a system such as the one you are suggesting, we will not be able to provide either that wealth neutrality or the categorical equity. Because how do you determine categorical equity unless you actually know the costs of providing specific programs in different parts of the province? That becomes the next thing. I am apologizing that I do not know the system in the colleges, but is it based strictly on the same per-pupil cost regardless of the location of the 22 colleges?

Mr Auld: There are minor differences with respect to special needs with students who are in the northern colleges. I would say that exactly the same argument would apply to primary and secondary education. I think in my remarks I covered that at the beginning by saying except for special needs and certain circumstances in one area or another where, for example, transportation costs would be much higher in some school districts than others. So you have to have additional financing.

But if you are talking about the basic funding, the funding upon which the equalization grants for education are counted, I am referring to that per capita funding, which for the colleges and universities is to a large extent on a per-student basis with various weights according to the particular program they are in.

For example, the technology courses in the colleges will have a 10 per cent premium and the nursing programs have a 20 per cent premium, but they are the same across all the colleges, in the same way that an honours science student at a university has a different funding level than a general arts student at a university, but it is the same across every university in Ontario.

Mr Keyes: So you would favour perhaps the establishment of a commission to actually determine the cost of programming.

Mr Auld: Of course, you would have to assess what the appropriate cost of the programming was in the schools and, if there were differences, to recognize those in terms of special needs in a particular district.

Several jurisdictions in Canada have certainly moved towards the categorical equity, Quebec, I guess, being at the extreme, New Brunswick virtually moving most of the funding now for primary and secondary education to the provincial level and one of the western provinces moving in that direction as well.

In Australia the states basically are determining the level of educational expenditures within the school board areas. It is true the financial accountability may be somewhat removed, but it depends on how the financing is undertaken. If moneys are transferred to the school boards on a per-pupil basis adjusted for special circumstances, there is still an enormous responsibility, in my view, on the part of the trustees of the school boards to make sure that that money is spent in an efficient and effective way. So I do not think there is a total lack of accountability there. The accountability changes. The nature of the accountability is altered.

Mr Keyes: I will just finalize this. If you were to move to your system, then the per-pupil figure arrived at would be not only the approved cost but also the total cost and you would not provide the opportunity for school boards which were trying to respond to their elected position to provide enhanced programming beyond what that per-pupil grant would provide.

Mr Auld: Only if the enhanced programming received the equalization treatment in terms of their being an identical tax burden, depending upon whether you are in a rich or a less-wealthy

school board. I think that is the crux of it. The system works well up to the recognized level of expenditure. It is when you lected position to provide enhanced programming beyond what that per-pupil grant would provide.

Mr Auld: Only if the enhanced programming received the equalization treatment in terms of their being an identical tax burden, depending upon whether you are in a rich or a less-wealthy school board. I think that is the crux of it. The system works well up to the recognized level of expenditure. It is when you go beyond that particular level that it is much less of a tax burden on the wealthy community compared to the less wealthy.

1550

I am not saying that the entire system lacks equity. What I am referring to is that we have wealth neutrality up to a certain level of expenditure, but it is above that level that there are these differences that depend upon the wealth of the local community.

Mr Keyes: In theory, in the colleges no overceiling expenditures are allowed.

Mr Auld: No.

Mr Keyes: That was my point. Do you support that position in elementary and secondary levels?

Mr Auld: To total wealth neutrality; yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You would not have the same problem with the health system costs going out of control, unless you wanted to pay teachers on a piecework basis, as we do doctors. I do not think anybody is going to suggest that we go in that direction. Anyway, we will not get into Bill 94 again.

There are certain ironies, of course, that the neutral system we have at the post-secondary level also denies access to huge numbers of people by the very fact of the tuition being involved in it and other kinds of determinants which have really stopped a lot of people from going on to post-secondary education, not the college system so much as the university system. But it is an irony that you would come forward with that.

There are obviously other principles involved besides just trying to involve that particular principle you are after, which I concur with. The Macdonald commission suggested a couple of approaches to deal with this. The Blair commission suggested another approach. You have not specifically said where you think the bucks should come from, because there are the other

issues of regressivity and progressivity in taxes as well that have to be addressed here.

I wonder if you want to expand any further on that in terms of whether you like the tax credit notion, the income tax notion, still maintaining a commercial-industrial tax or whether we should do that on assessment or profit, etc. There are those other principles underlying the financing, of course.

Mr Auld: If you were to move to a system of equal financing for all students regardless of where they live in the province, you would be then abandoning the local decisions to utilize the property tax base for that particular purpose. That could be assumed by the province. So you could have your pooling of all assessment, not just commercial and industrial, but you could pool all the assessment that is now used for the tax system, in the same way that British Columbia now pools all the industrial-commercial assessment, takes the money into Victoria and then hands it back on a per-pupil basis to the school boards across British Columbia. That is the way they dealt with it. They have gone partway towards that system.

You could abandon the property tax totally, which some people I guess would like, but then you would have to substitute additional income taxation at the provincial level, or sales or corporate taxes or some other revenue source, to generate that lost money to be handed out. Any of those ways has benefits and costs associated with it.

I do not think you can say that this is the ideal system. Politicians have to weigh those benefits and costs and decide which is in the best interests of the province. There is no question that you would have to move a significant part of the tax resource base out of the local sector, roughly 55 per cent of education from the tax base, and either pool that and then distribute the revenue back on a per-pupil basis or simply abandon the education part of the property tax and increase the revenues for the province of Ontario using those revenues to go back to the school boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I concur with your feeling that the kind of financial accountability the boards have now—you did not say this also—is so confused anyway that there is really nothing very important about keeping that particular sacred cow, and constitutional guarantees of function can be brought into place. Can you tell us what the situation is in Australia? The states fund entirely. Are there local boards?

Mr Auld: There are local boards in terms of responsibility for the running of the schools, but

the financing for each student is done from state revenue, and then you have the federal government intervening to take care of the differences in level of state wealth. In fact, in the last few years, that has been the major push in Australia, to deal with the fact that the low-income states or low-wealth states have not been supplying nearly the same revenue to the education system as New South Wales, for example, which is quite wealthy. So the federal government has stepped in and said, "Primary and secondary education are too important for the whole country and therefore, we are going to simply top up the funding for primary and secondary education." I do not know all the details, but they have gone through a number of problems with different formulas they have worked out, and I gather they have one that is now working, but I would not be able to give you the details on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: State legislation empowers the boards to act in certain fashions, I presume, so we should maybe try to get a hold of some of that.

The Vice-Chairman: We were hoping you would not be able to answer that quite so thoroughly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I did not think it was that thorough. I think it still warrants investigation.

The Vice-Chairman: We should still go and investigate it?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Absolutely. I am not satisfied.

Mr Auld: You might also want to look at the way the federal system works in Japan as well.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Good point.

The Vice-Chairman: Absolutely.

Mr Auld: You could stop over on the way.

Mr Kozyra: Mr Auld, in expanding on your concept of wealth and neutrality on page 3, you go on to say: "That does not mean there will be no difference in per-pupil expenditure among communities; what it means is that those differences will not have any relationship to differences in wealth but would rather reflect local preferences for education."

I am wondering, in your research, whether you are able to give hard data and facts on just how strong the correlation is between the wealth and those extras, as opposed to a community's strong preference to provide extras no matter what it exacts from them over and above.

Mr Auld: In a statistical sense, in terms of the quantitative statistical work I did covering the period up to 1985-86 for the Macdonald commis-

sion on education, the relationship was statistically significant. I am sorry I do not have that information with me today. I am sure you people can get that, the commission's background papers, but I would not have drawn that conclusion if I could not have said that there was a correlation and that it was a statistically significant correlation between the additional expenditure per pupil and the local wealth.

Mr Kozyra: Can you recall? Is that two thirds, or 75 per cent?

Mr Auld: It would be at the 95 per cent level.

Mr Kozyra: So extremely significant. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Auld, for taking the time to be here today and share your views with us and your very positive suggestions that we investigate other venues. We very much appreciate it.

Mr Auld: Thank you for the opportunity.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman. Does Mr Auld know we all have his book? As members of the committee, we were all given the accompaniments on the Macdonald report, so you have not been forgotten.

The Vice-Chairman: Believe it or not, we are actually almost three minutes ahead of schedule. But just to throw you off completely, we have a gentleman who has made a request of the clerk, Howard Mountain, who is a private citizen who wrote a letter to our chair requesting an opportunity to make a presentation and did not apparently get scheduled. There is a possibility, if the committee agrees, of putting it in at 11:30 tomorrow morning.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If I might have a preference, it would be to take some time at the end of the morning to go over a few things in camera, if the committee would not mind.

The Vice-Chairman: Okay, to go over some in camera items. We will take that request under advisement and I will undertake to talk to our chairman about perhaps scheduling it at another time.

Our next presentation is the Ontario Teachers' Federation, represented by three or four folks. I will wait to see who arrives before I announce them. Three? Perhaps you could introduce yourselves for the purpose of Hansard. You have been allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, which hopefully will include an opportunity for members of the committee to ask questions. Welcome.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mrs Polowy: I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present today on behalf of the Ontario Teachers' Federation. I am Beverley Polowy, the president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation. Accompanying me today is Margaret Wilson, the secretary-treasurer of OTF, and David Aylsworth, an executive assistant at OTF, and many of my colleagues from the affiliates.

1600

I believe you received a copy of our brief and I will be referring to certain parts of it and will bring those to your attention when I come to those parts.

Some of the major areas we will be emphasizing today have to do with the underfunding of education. Since the mid-1970s, OTF has been expressing its concern about the ongoing and continuing pattern of diminishing provincial participation in the funding of education.

There has been a decrease from a high in 1975 of over 60 per cent in the provincial support to a low of less than 45 per cent in 1988. With 1989 inflation projected at 5.1 per cent and operating grants, not inclusive of the 1987 throne speech initiatives, scheduled to increase by four per cent, we would see school boards transferring 1.1 per cent less in real terms in 1989 than it did in 1988.

The appendix to our brief contains a summary of the throne speech initiatives, and that is found on page 13; the impact and direction those initiatives have taken is to be found summarized there.

Another main focus will be the proportion of local property taxes to support education. The level has increased annually by nine per cent since 1981 and taxpayers next year will encounter double-digit increases.

In the throne speech of 25 April, the Premier (Mr Peterson) tied the economic potential of the province and the realization of the individual potential of Ontarians to a purposeful and relevant education system. The harsh reality is that the province's financial commitment has not matched its rhetoric.

Table 1, page 2, illustrates the next points. Since 1983, the provincial government has fallen below the 50 per cent level in transfer payments and in only one year, 1987, has the previous year's level been maintained.

Support for school boards, which in the mid-1970s was the top government priority, has slipped to fourth place. Given the province's economy, with Ontario entering its seventh

consecutive year of economic growth, it is difficult to understand the government's reluctance to provide sufficient resources for education.

Reduced provincial participation rates have forced an increased reliance on local property taxes. School boards are faced with the problem of providing equitable, high-quality educational programs with a substantially inequitable assessment based.

Tables 2 and 3, on pages 5 and 6, show us that expenditure levels recognized for grant purposes remain substantially below actual costs. In 1988, the median cost of educating each elementary student was approximately \$460 more than the per-pupil costs recognized for grant purposes. At the secondary level, median costs were about \$980 more per pupil. Across the province, over 98 per cent of all elementary and secondary students were educated at per-pupil costs in excess of the level recognized for grant purposes. The recognized levels for grant purposes no longer bear much resemblance to actual costs.

At the present rate of participation by the province in the funding of education, the government's goals of equality, of educational opportunity and of universal access to a quality education are not being met. The real disparity lies in relative assessment wealth, in the ability of school boards to raise money locally. Without the provincial participation at the previous level of 60 per cent, equality of educational opportunity for the students of Ontario is not achievable.

The all-party standing committee on finance and economic affairs reaffirmed this position in 1988.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is recommending that the government of Ontario announce a phased increase in its participation in the funding of elementary and secondary education to not less than 60 per cent of school board operating expenditures.

New initiatives during periods of economic restraint often have meant reduced commitments in other areas. Between 1978 and 1983, a significant decline was experienced in per-pupil support for elementary and secondary pupils not declared exceptional. Funding was diverted from established programs to support the government's initiatives in special education and related to OSIS.

While the 1987 throne speech initiatives are certainly laudable, half of this year's new required financing will be provided by diverting funds from base operating grants. The federation recommends that the government identify the

costs associated with its initiatives and provide appropriate additional funding to offset costs associated with new policies and programs.

Elementary and secondary education, which has struggled for a decade and a half under conditions of economic restraint, must be revitalized. Equality of educational opportunity to meet the diverse needs of the children of this province must be provided. The first step is to reverse the decline in the provincial participation rate in the funding of education.

OTF requests that the select committee recommend to the government an increase in the announced 1989 transfers to school boards so that base operating grants can be increased at least by the projected change in the cost of living, and that a five-year program be adopted to re-establish the provincial participation rate at the 60 per cent level.

Capital investment since the early 1970s has been minimal, resulting in urgently needed replacement and repair of school building systems which are nearing the end of their projected life expectancy, even while the need for new student places increases daily as well.

Although recent budgets have committed \$300 million annually for four years to capital expenditures, over 90 per cent of the first-year allocation went to growth-related projects. Substantial portions of future allocations must be directed to renewal projects or the public is in danger of losing the \$17-billion investment in ageing school capital facilities.

Summarized on page 14 of our brief are the recommendations on the financing of elementary and secondary education in Ontario which the Ontario Teachers' Federation wishes to make to the select committee for recommendation to the government.

The Vice-Chairman: You might want to read those into the record so they are on Hansard.

Mrs Polowy: Recommendations: That the select committee on education recommend that the government of Ontario announce a phased increase in its participation in the funding of elementary and secondary education to not less than 60 per cent of total operating costs of school boards;

That the government provide sufficient additional funding to offset costs associated with new policy and program initiatives;

That the government increase the announced 1989 transfers to school boards by \$42 million so that base operating grants to school boards can be increased by the projected change in the cost of living;

That the government announce in the 1990 Ontario budget a five-year commitment to increase its participation rate in the funding of elementary and secondary education to 60 per cent of total operating costs of school boards so as to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all children;

That the government make a five-year commitment for the provision of education capital for both renewal and growth-related needs.

1610

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We have Mr Johnston for questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Beverley et al, for presenting and being here today. It may be that you just have to keep throwing the same statistics at me for them to finally get through, but I do not think I registered the figure on page 8 before, that there has been a 3.5 per cent decline in real terms for the maximum grant to the average-wealth boards. I do not know if your member affiliates had brought that to our attention before or not. It certainly had not registered with me.

It seems to be quite alarming in terms of the effect on some of those boards and on the taxpayers, as you say. Is this an overnight thing, or do I get from the tables on the following page that this is something that has been happening now for several years in a row?

Mr Aylsworth: In terms of the elementary panel, it is evidence of the implementation of the new program that grants to school boards are not measured totally in recognized ordinary expenditure, ROE, but also in terms of the rate of grant. It is that product that determines the maximum number of dollars that are transferred.

In terms of what is happening at the secondary panel, it is also noteworthy that the effect is compounded. With the inclusion of the Roman Catholic boards in the primary grant distribution mechanism, the actual numbers understate the effect, because the board of average wealth is now significantly poorer.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I notice you have given two five-year plans. It is quite revolutionary, if one can put it in those terms, for the government to come up to the 60 per cent figure again. I thought that was very generous of you, first. Second, can you give me some idea of the rationale behind choosing that lead-in? Is it just that we are so far behind now, 42 per cent or 43 per cent?

Mrs Wilson: If you look at the fact that education at one point ranked first in terms of

government expenditure in the province and it is now fourth, and if you then look at where the money has gone—hospitals, municipalities and OHIP—we believe the government cannot make a radical shift in funding in one year without dislocating other elements in the total allocation package. We know it is one pie. While we are alarmed at what has happened to education, we would rather not see the patients out on the street either. We do think the question has to be grappled with. Education sounds good in speeches as a provincial priority, but it is not the priority when it comes to the allocation of money. Right now, we are seriously strapped for resources.

David wishes to respond also.

Mr Aylsworth: To both of the proposals. I distinguish between the five-year capital proposal, because I think that is necessary for planning reasons, but in terms of the operating grant, the amount that would be required would be well over \$1 billion to put that right. If you did it in one year, there is no guarantee that it would flow through to the taxpayer. You would have a situation where the local property rates were significantly out of step with the needs of the school boards if the government were to pour that much money into them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other thing is the process for establishing ceilings. We have now had several groups, I am glad to say, talk about changing the approach we have at the moment to make that slightly more orderly and involve all the players in the system. For instance, somebody this morning was thinking about it much as the curriculum process takes place at the moment in terms of how it could be done. Have you had any thoughts about how the establishment of realistic ceilings can be undertaken in terms of using the players?

Mrs Wilson: At one time there was a minister's advisory committee on financing education. In fact, at one time I was one of the federation's representatives on that committee. The committee involved teacher representatives, school board trustee representatives and administrative representatives, and we did meet monthly to consult with the ministry on general and particular issues of financing. The committee died a few years ago. We have been requesting every year since then that it be re-established so that there can be an adequate consultative process. Whether or not that is the ideal one, I do not know, but it was one that did seem to be quite effective in many respects.

Mr Aylsworth: There is a practical consideration. Under normal circumstances, if all school boards had the same ability to raise money, it would be purely a mathematical exercise to increase the ROE and decrease the rate of support in a very simple equation, but the limiting factor here is the disparity of the ability of school boards to raise money. Very simply, given the amount of money that the province is putting into the equation, it could not raise the ROE without putting some of the school boards in a net negative position, where the student shows up and they have to send the government a quarter.

Mr Furlong: Most of your brief is dedicated to spending, to the contribution of funds to boards. With the exception of some comment on pooling—and I take it you advocate pooling on a provincial basis as opposed to regional—you have not commented on the other side of the coin, as to where you would anticipate the government would get the revenue in order to accommodate the 60 per cent—I suppose in some instances it has been noted before—of a blank cheque.

Have you given any thought, or do you have a position on whether the base of our tax system should continue to be on the real property taxpayer or whether there should be some other form of taxation, whether it be income tax, sales tax or just some other form? Even with your five-year projection proposal that we get back up to 60 per cent, I always wonder: 60 per cent of what? You can argue that we raise the base substantially and take a period in time. I believe, after listening to a lot of briefs in the last little while, that there will never be an amount that will be adequate. No matter how much is being put into the pie, there will still be the demand for more.

Mrs Polowy: I agree with you that there will never be an adequate amount. I suppose in many ways I must speak to you from my real base of knowledge, which is that of a classroom teacher. I am an elementary schoolteacher. I believe it is in the classrooms of the province where the decline in funding has been felt, and perhaps it has been felt more predominantly in some areas than in others, based primarily on the fact that amounts of money have to be raised locally in order to provide the kind of educational experience that a school board does provide.

Mrs Wilson: School boards in the province are not providing frills every day. It is quite easy to ask us how the tax system should be adjusted. There are only a certain number of sources of taxation any government has and I think it is up to the government to make policy decisions on

whether it is going to tax whiskey or groceries or income to pay for what the government says it wants the system to deliver.

What is going on right now is that every single year in which I have been involved in the educational system in Ontario, from the provincial government have come new imperatives that have to be met by the school system. I have never yet seen one taken away; they are always additions. So it is fine to say there is never enough money, but partly there is never enough money because of the constant add-ons. I think you have to grapple with that end, of policy, as well as grappling with the source of funding. The last three throne speeches I can think of, two from this government and one from your predecessors, had major education initiatives all costing money; none of them with additional money; all in fact decreasing the money that was available for the core program.

Mr Furlong: I do not want to debate the issue with you, but—

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Mr R. F. Johnston: Come on.

The Vice-Chairman: That is good.

Mr Furlong: I will leave it at that, Mr Chairman. The temptation will be to prolong the debate.

The Vice-Chairman: Mr Jackson, who also does not want to debate.

Mr Jackson: Actually, those were the general areas of my questions, as well, if you could enlighten us if you have put any thought to areas where the additional revenues would come. As you quoted your presentations to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, it is a standard question we always ask groups, because we are doing prebudget consultation.

Let me attack it from another angle, the issue of accountability. It strikes me that we will never stop the political process of making announcements in education and raising expectations and then debating whether sufficient funding was flowing from the province to a given school board. Several groups have come forward and suggested that we have an awkward accounting system within school boards, that we do not have program-based accounting, we do not have a consistent means by which across the province we can demonstrate that a given initiative is costing so many additional dollars and they will be borne by local taxpayers. That may be the simple one.

The worse one is where the school board is in a position to say, "Well, fine, we're going to steal

a little bit on the pupil-teacher ratio in the junior and intermediate levels in order to meet the mandate of the primary division staffing adjustments." We have been told there are several boards who have done that. I find that equally offensive.

So perhaps you could talk to us about any advice you might give us in terms of accountability, auditing, public presentation of real costs in education. In fairness, Mr Furlong has made a good point, that the brief is predominantly—there are insufficient dollars. Everybody agrees on that. We are struggling as a committee to try and strengthen some accountability points, and when it comes to program delivery we should not debate who got the funding or who did not, but whether kids are suffering as a result of decisions being made, period.

Mr Neumann: Do you want us to cut further?

Mr Jackson: No. Quite frankly, you know that is not where I am coming from. I am asking this group, which is representing the Ontario teachers in this province, to indicate to what extent school boards could strengthen their accounting and their accountability procedures in terms of classroom objectives versus provincial objectives. It strikes me that school boards, by their own legislative makeup, have an accountability fiscal side and they have an educational side and the director wears both those hats. Somehow things fall between the cracks because of that.

Mrs Wilson: I do not think things fall between the cracks. I think we could improve the accountability system, if you like, in the province—the reporting system would be perhaps a better way to talk about it—because our data collection in many areas in education is inadequate. I would hope it would be done in such a way that it does not seem like the Gestapo landing at the school board's gate.

But even when it comes to accountability, if you are talking about straight accounting procedures, making sure that the books are well kept—often, previous work I have done—quite often in the smaller school boards it is very difficult to get people who are qualified to do that job. They do not always find it easy. Perhaps model systems that could be used by those boards would help with that.

There are totally inadequate data on what actual class sizes are in the province in any part of the system, if you want to look at one where nobody could really tell you. But the other problem you are going to run into when it comes to accountability—I used to work in one of the

system's large metropolitan school boards and when the ministry wanted accountability the board more or less said: "Why should we bother with you? You don't give us any money. We're accountable to the people who are giving us money, the local taxpayers." I think you have to live with that, as well. That is not a new thing in Metro Toronto. I do think the accountability systems could be sharpened up and improved. I think we need to know more about what is happening with the money for two audiences: the local taxpayers as well as the provincial government.

Mr Jackson: Any comment on the recent suggestion that the reporting panels, elementary and secondary, be rolled into one? Any comments from your organization?

Mrs Wilson: I think we are concerned about that in terms of whether we will get adequate data on what is happening with the money.

Mr Kozyra: Let me first say that I share your concern as it relates to the fact that, based on funding, it appears that education now ranks fourth behind hospitals, municipalities and OHIP. One of the reasons there—and certainly not the only reason—is that the funding to those areas, especially the hospitals and OHIP, has been labelled open-ended, and in some people's estimation has resulted in uncontrollable costs.

Keeping that perspective in mind in relation to your number one recommendation, that says "not less than 60 per cent of total operating costs," comment on, perhaps from seeing the wisdom in the redefinition of that 60 per cent of approved costs, an expanded definition of what "approved" means—in light of the fact that one of the main driving forces of this reranking and the government's financial problems is what might be called uncontrolled costs in other areas, do you not see the wisdom in applying some controls through approved cost formula in this one?

Mr Aylsworth: The problem with the proposal is the relationship that the current level of approved costs bears to the actual cost of education. Local education costs are increasing and distancing themselves from the level of approved costs. Over a 15-year period, there has been a reduction in the support of local education costs by the province from 60 per cent to now less than 45 per cent. There have been some real casualties in the process and the casualties are the children who are educated in assessment-poor boards or in small schools or schools in remote communities. Very simply, the school boards in those areas have no choice but to educate

students at the level that is established as approved, whether or not it bears any relation to an appropriate cost for educating a student.

Mr Kozyra: Are you saying that if we could get the majority of parties to agree to a new, expanded definition of "approved costs," tying a percentage to the approved costs in the funding basis would be something you could work with?

Mr Aylsworth: Rearranging labels will not produce equality of educational opportunity. The disparity in the ability to fund local education programs based on the ability to raise money from the local property tax is so vast that unless the amount, the so-called approved cost, represents a major fraction of the actual cost of educating a child, then you have not improved anything; you are just rearranging it.

Mr Kozyra: How do you put some cap on the open-ended or uncontrollable costs, whether here or in any other area?

Mr Aylsworth: I believe there is a suggestion in the brief that says peg it at some point, peg it at last year's total expenditure limit and allow that amount to increase by the cost of living, and that will be a surrogate for a cap.

The Vice-Chairman: I would like to think the OTF for your presentation today.

Mrs Polowy: Could I make one final comment? As part of my responsibilities this year, I am serving on a Canadian Teachers' Federation committee that is looking at the needs of refugee and immigrant children. I would like to put in a plug for this committee to recommend to the provincial government that it pursue some federal funding in order to look after or help the provinces out with the study of the needs. There has been a very drastic increase in costs to certain geographical areas for providing education for these particular students in the areas of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. It seems to me that an area in which this committee might do some persuasion is to have the provincial government go after federal funding.

1630

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much for that suggestion and thank you again for your presentation today.

Our final presenters are the Ontario Public Education Network, represented by a number of people. I will introduce and ask Paul Sherratt to come forward as chairman of the OPEN board of governors. Perhaps Mr Sherratt can then introduce his presenting panel.

We have, as usual, set aside 30 minutes and we would ask that you work within that time frame

and leave some time, if possible, for questions from the members.

ONTARIO PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

Mr Sherratt: I am pleased to introduce the board of governors of the Ontario Public Education Network. I am Paul Sherratt, chair of the OPEN board of governors. I am also chair of the Ontario Public School Directors' Association and the director of education for the Perth County Board of Education. As well, with us this afternoon are Jim Head, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation; Ruth Lafarga, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association; Bill Martin, president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation; and Helen Penfold, president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario.

The Ontario Public Education Network, also known as OPEN, is a political action coalition of the associations and federations representing 1,300 public school trustees from 92 public school boards with a student population of 1.3 million and 500,000 adult learners. It is also composed of representatives of 80,000 public school teachers and the directors of education of the public school boards of this province.

The purpose of our presentation to the select committee on education in this phase of its work, examining school finance policy issues, is to challenge the members of the committee to reflect on some of the stated and unstated premises of certain of the messages you have received to date.

We have questions to raise about the adequacy of taxes and tax sources for schools. We have questions to raise about the equity of downloading school costs from provincial tax sources on to property taxpayers. We have questions to raise about capital funding for schools. We have questions to raise about the legitimacy of the arguments mastered by those who clamour for more and more takeaways from the traditional local property tax base of public schools. We ask why is it that we have a school finance system that depends increasingly on local resources and decreasingly on provincial ones.

Ontario has only one universal system of education, one dedicated to ensuring that all those who have a right to elementary and secondary education can exercise that right. Public education is a benefit to all and therefore everyone has the corresponding responsibility to pay property taxes in support of their local public schools.

As an educator, I am continually excited by the unique aspect of the teaching profession that allows one to touch the future through our students. Students entering our system this September will be graduating from our public schools well into the next century. It is imperative that the integrity of the one public school system that has a mandate to provide education for all who ask, without question, receive the funding necessary to meet the commitment of excellence in education that is a fundamental right of every citizen.

I commend the provincial government for the foresight to provide these hearings so that the constituent members of the Ontario Public Education Network may work in concert with provincial policymakers to collectively meet our common objective of having one public education system capable of providing excellent educational programs for each and every student and adult learner who seeks such an education.

It is essential that the concerns of the public education system be understood and appreciated so that our students and adult learners will allow us to indeed touch the future as a result of receiving an excellent education in a system that must continue to be viable from a funding perspective.

Each representative will briefly outline various aspects of our brief. We will then be prepared to answer questions that members may pose before us. I will first call upon Ruth Lafarga.

Mrs Lafarga: I want to deal with the need for capital funding. I am sure that during your hearings you have heard a great deal about the need for capital funding in the two areas of both construction and the maintenance and upgrading of facilities. I think the statistics are well in place: the estimated value of our schools of \$20 billion and the some 200,000 students who are being educated in portable classrooms.

We have heard, too, the minister with recent statements that he wants to focus on educational issues rather than capital issues. We want to remind the committee that it is the legal obligation that every person from six to 16 attend school that creates the need for student spaces in the province, and it is the province that really creates the demand for capital construction. This of course is delegated to local boards. It is also the province that mandates that we fight against the dropout rate, that we have compulsory junior kindergarten, that we have reduced class sizes and that we offer full-day kindergarten. These additional programs that have been mandated create the increased demand for spaces.

It is also through provincial initiatives that we see demand for renovations and alterations. When the province wants students to be computer literate we have to upgrade the facilities so that we can in fact have students who will be computer literate. When the province wants better technological and science education, we have to have modern labs and technological facilities that will support that.

I would say to you that boards certainly want to do as the minister does and focus on educational issues, but we are increasingly finding that the human and financial resources of our board have to address the capital issues: where to have students, how to finance the issues I have addressed above, and providing new spaces and upgrading. We have to put a great deal of time into dealing with the parents of the dislocated students and a great deal of time on arranging transportation issues.

The issues we feel the committee should be addressing are the size of the budget for capital, the allocation that is made between new pupil places and the upgrading and renovation. We really would ask that the capital grant plan be updated. A capital grant plan that was devised for the 1960s is certainly no longer appropriate for schools that are going to be built in the 1990s. A capital grant plan that allocates money for two electrical outlets in a classroom when you have to install computer labs is obviously not very appropriate, and when you are looking at funding a draughting room you get allocation for 20 draughting boards and 20 stools, but in fact we should be putting CAD-CAMs. It is time we upgraded our capital grant plan.

There are recommendations we have in the capital area. I would like to read them:

1. OPEN recommends that the provincial government, in collaboration with school boards, develop a long-range capital investment strategy for elementary and secondary schools.

2. OPEN recommends that the provincial government establish two distinct categories for school capital funding: growth and renewal.

3. OPEN recommends that the province provide additional funds, beyond the \$300 million a year already committed through 1992, for school renewal. The existing commitment should be dedicated to new pupil places and a fresh commitment starting with at least \$100 million to be made annually to the cause of school capital renewal. This amount of \$100 million represents one half of one per cent of the present value of our schools. This school renewal

capital fund should grow to \$300 million as quickly as provincial revenues permit.

4. OPEN recommends that the government reconsider its responsibility for school facilities and restore its share of all capital projects to 75 per cent.

1640

Ms Penfold: We believe that public education has been grossly underfunded by the provincial government. The share of the provincial budget allocated for education has dropped from 25.5 per cent in 1969 to 13 per cent in 1989. The facts speak for themselves. The province's share of the cost of public education has steadily dropped from 55 per cent to 34.5 per cent in the last 20 years and it is still falling. More and more, the burden is being borne by local boards of education.

We talk about the 60 per cent issue and what is realistic and what is not. Well, once again, I think the facts speak for themselves in looking at what the average costs are for educating a child in the province right now. In 1988, the average cost of educating a public elementary student was \$4,802, while the grant was \$1,676. The average cost of educating a secondary school student was \$6,206, while the grant was \$1,987. The ceilings simply do not reflect the true cost of educating a child.

The province dictates how much a local municipality must raise to educate its children. The provincial equalized mill rate is the format. When the government raises the provincial equalized mill rate, it shifts part of its burden to the local taxpayer. This government has raised the provincial equalized mill rate dramatically. This change has shifted an estimated \$350 million in costs from the province to local people and businesses.

The province also refuses to recognize and meet the true costs of education, and it is the children who suffer the consequences. Unless recognition of the real costs of education are included in the grant plan, the province will no longer be able to maintain its espoused policy of ensuring equal educational opportunity for all students.

We have some recommendations under the adequacy section:

5. OPEN recommends that the Ontario government's priority on excellence in education be accompanied with the human and financial resources necessary for these goals.

6. OPEN recommends that the province's share of the costs of education be no less than 60 per cent of the total costs.

7. OPEN recommends that provincial grants for elementary and secondary education be increased to reflect adequately the true costs of educating each student.

8. OPEN recommends that the provincial government, in collaboration with school boards, undertake a review of the true costs of educating special needs students.

9. OPEN recommends that the Ontario government provide an \$80-million catch-up grant for the two per cent enrolment increase in 1989 for which the 1989 transfer payments paid no account.

Mr Martin: The next section of the paper deals with the funding of private schools. We feel we have to mention this because of the number of delegations that have come before the select committee to talk in terms of this issue.

OPEN does not believe that this question should be addressed by the select committee at this time, nor does it believe that the select committee's process is adequate to provide a full exploration of any change in the traditional relationship between private schools and the government.

OPEN believes that an increase in private schools would inevitably be generated through government funding and incorporate substantial costs to the public school taxpayer, something that we know is happening now. Private and independent schools should not receive public funding, and while private schools may be a legal alternative within the status of Ontario, such an alternative does not necessitate public funding.

The recommendation in this section of the paper is recommendation 10:

10. OPEN recommends that there be no public funding of private schools in Ontario.

The next section deals with the goods and services tax, the move of our friends in Ottawa. We are in support that this provincial government be opposed to the nine per cent goods and services tax that is being proposed by the federal government.

We also have concerns dealing with the exemption of private schools' tuitions with the goods and services tax.

The two recommendations in this area are:

11. OPEN recommends that the provincial government continue to press the federal government to ensure that the GST does not become an added financial burden to school boards.

12. OPEN recommends that the provincial government oppose the provision in the proposed GST to exempt the tuition fees of private schools from this tax.

Mr Head: The last section deals with pooling and I am going to try to go through it quickly to leave time for questions.

OPEN has been and remains opposed to the pooling of publicly traded commercial and industrial assessment between coterminous public and separate school boards. We do so for two particular reasons.

One is the fiscal security of our systems. The moment you start taking money away, one has to wonder what the future will bring. But more important is the autonomy of the school board, because it is the local taxation base that gives trustees the right to be in trust and therefore to run the school systems according to the needs of the community. The corollary to that of course is that we feel public taxes are going higher at a time when the provincial share is going down.

At the bottom of the page you can see that we have concerns about pooling, but what we would like to explore with you is the fact that we were told this was going to be a one-time thing. It is our belief that in fact there are four types of pooling right now on the table.

We call the first one pooling 1, which is what the government has proposed and which is the redistribution to be done on the basis of each school board's share of residential and farm assessment. One has to question, however, the estimates the government has provided in terms of the catch-up factor so that the public school boards would not, in effect, lose. It is our estimate that there is going to be at least \$274 million of shortfall, and I say "at least." Currently, we are doing an impact study and we are quite clear that using the ministry's own figures, that study will show very clearly it will probably be more than \$274 million.

The second is what we call pooling 2. This has to do with the removal of the six-mile zone to coterminous boundaries. The government has given no indication of considering any compensation for those public school boards that may be negatively affected. When you take that boundary out and put it into a coterminous situation, that coterminous situation has access to the pooling of commercial-industrial assessment, which they did not have before. We have a proposed study that we are doing on that and the initial indications show that that too is going to hurt public boards.

Pooling 3 has to do with something that is currently in the works in terms of a lawsuit that is specific to Bill 109. Essentially, it is based on student enrolment. If it is successful, it would

drastically change the terms of how public boards are funded.

What I would suggest is that if there really were to be a one-time thing with pooling, appropriate legislation could be drafted to deal with this particular problem, because the tax base for public school boards, which is at risk from what we are calling pooling 3, is significantly greater than the tax base to be redistributed under pooling 1 or pooling 2. So it has tremendous implications for us.

Pooling 4 is a variation of pooling 3, which would go not only with pooling based on student enrolment, but could lead to comparisons between francophone and anglophone boards. That would have a horrendous affect on us as well.

The Ontario Public Education Network views the four different dimensions of pooling with utmost concern. Our two recommendations are:

13. OPEN recommends that no pooling proposal be implemented at least until an accurate assessment of the financial impact can be carried out in conjunction with public school boards.

14. OPEN recommends that once the impact assessment has been completed and analysed, the government must commit itself to guaranteeing that grants equal to the revenues lost to public school boards through pooling be allocated on an ongoing basis in addition to any other grants, which we believe was the original commitment.

Mr Sherratt: We are prepared to answer any question you may wish to pose.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you very much. We have Mr Kozyra first.

1650

Mr Kozyra: My question relates to the adequacy of school funding. In the second paragraph, you acknowledge the fact that there is a difference between the funding for elementary and secondary school students. Many of the groups that have appeared before us pointed to this difference as one of their concerns in relation to inequity. You do not point to that. Your concern is the inadequacy of provincial funding in each case, but you seem to entrench the difference between the two as acceptable.

I wonder if you would comment on that, because your recommendation does not make any comment on the difference between the two but speaks of adequacy in each case.

Ms Penfold: That is intentional. As you know, OPEN is a coalition of groups, so it is important for us to speak with one voice as a coalition. Within that coalition, we believe that

the funding the way it is now as far as grants are concerned—we put in these statistics to show you that the average amount spent to educate a child is much below what the government is allocating in both elementary and secondary.

Mr Kozyra: I realize that, but what do you say to those who say the elementary education is much more crucial, as most studies indicate, than the secondary, and therefore the underfunding or the gap between the two is made all the more critical? You do not seem to address that.

Ms Penfold: I think that both secondary and elementary schools would agree, and Jim, I would ask you to address this as well, if you wish. We have both agreed that the early years are critical in the education of a child.

Mr Head: Within OPEN, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is in agreement that elementary education has a great deal of importance and relevance. We just simply say that within the terms of adequacy for both panels, it is inadequate.

Mr Kozyra: I interpret it as saying that despite great concern about both, you feel that secondary is a little more important than elementary. That is how I read your recommendation. I spent 24 years in the secondary and I know a bias exists there, to some extent, even now. I still read the recommendation that way.

Mr Sherratt: I do not think that is a fair interpretation. As a director, I am responsible for all students. Each and every student is critical to us. We care for each and every student. The funding we receive for those students to provide educational programs is not adequate. That is the message we wish to leave. One is no more important than the other; they are all important.

Mr Head: I believe that if you go back to the record in Hansard for the OSSTF position on funding, it will be consistent with what I have said here today.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree that it has been. One has to understand that somebody heading a federation made up of secondary school teachers is going to speak on its behalf as well. I think this is not to be ignored. I do not want to try to get into the business of drawing distinctions about where the various components of OPEN are coming from.

I want to get around to the pooling question a little bit from a different angle. A fellow who was on two presentations before you, President Auld from the Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology, was talking a lot about the whole problem of categorical equity, as he called it,

within the system and assessment-rich areas doing better than assessment-poor areas, whether you were in the Catholic or public system at this point, and that really we should be trying to aim at having similar resources, some kind of equity in terms of this per-student need being the basis of what we are put to.

I am wondering if the pooling question does not beg some questions around that. On the one hand, you seem to be very caught up in the local autonomy argument for the boards as a fundamental part of why pooling is dangerous and wanting to maintain that local control. On the other hand, in our present system, we have the same expectations of autonomy, if I can put it that way, on the Metropolitan Toronto board, which pays 100 per cent of the shot, and the board representing ratepayers in Wawa, which is paying a much smaller proportion of the shot. We seem to think—and I do not know whether you disagree—that the notion of their being autonomous is similar, even though it begs some constitutional questions in terms of none of the shot being paid in Metro at the moment.

Therefore, I am looking to see if we do not actually have to look at some other means of funding, rather than a commercial property tax base or a private person's property tax base, to be able to get to that categorical equity that the gentleman was talking about today.

I do not know, with as broad a coalition as yours, coming from the various perspectives, boards and federations, that you are at all able to come to a consensus about a major change of thrust to, say, a corporate tax base which is based on the ability of corporations to pay rather than on a property tax base and on an income tax base rather than the present property tax base as a more equitable way of funding the individual student and then work out our autonomy basis on constitutionally divided powers between the boards and the province.

Mr Head: I will start on that. I think all of us will have something to say, Mr Johnston. First of all, from our perspective, it is a matter of priority and we are certainly open as a view of priority education, but I recognize that there is something like \$2.6 billion in operating surplus this year from the government. The question is then: Where is the priority if it is not going to be education? Who is going to get that share?

But we come at it from the point of view of what we were promised prior to Bill 30. We were told at that time, by a previous government, that it was only going to cost \$50 million. We were made a promise by this present government that

we were not going to be underfunded and we would not be adversely affected. So our primary concern is that we maintain that promise and commitment. I think that within OPEN as a coalition we would have trouble being all in agreement on all of those areas, but I am sure that if we wanted to look at a variety of taxation structures, each of the groups would have some thoughts on that.

Mrs Lafarga: If I could speak from the point of view of the boards, I think that we do not have the capacity to do the analysis that would be necessary in that particular area, but we would certainly be very prepared to work with the government in having a look at different costing models and also analysing the impact of different sources of funding.

I think that that is where we would make the offer there. I think that whatever you looked at, we would just want you to remember the special mandate of the public system, which is that it be universally available for everyone.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just as a comment, I was not meaning to attack the fact that you are coming from—I understand exactly the points that Mr Head was making. It is just that I am thinking the committee is going to have to, besides addressing some of those existing issues, as we come to the end of the century, take a really hard look at where we are going. I welcome your suggestion that we maybe recommend a process of looking at some other alternatives which involve various players. That would be very helpful to us. I thank you for saying that.

Mr Neumann: My question relates to the pooling and the relationship to your coalition as such. I notice that your coalition is the Ontario Public Education Network and we have had other presenters mention that we basically have two public education systems: the public school boards and now the separate school system is publicly funded.

Through most of your brief, I did not see a distinction between what you might be saying and what representatives of separate school students might be saying in terms of presentations to the government and additional funding for education and additional involvement and "Hit closer to the 60 per cent mark," and so on. What basically distinguishes you, then? Is it this pooling issue that distinguishes your organization from the separate school representatives who have come before us?

Mrs Lafarga: I believe that what distinguishes us is that we are the only system that is truly open to everyone. That is where our name

comes from, I guess. We are the only system to which, when someone comes to our doors, he has access. I think that that is a very strong distinction in terms of education. We tend to use it as a cliché that irrespective of age, race and all the other things, but if you really about what that means, we do not turn anyone away. We do not look at what their religious background is, where they come from in the world or anything else. This system is open, irrespective of their disability or anything. Our system is open, and I think that that is a very special mandate. I would suggest that it is something that a society should look very carefully at, what would happen if we lost that system of education.

1700

Mr Neumann: I understand that point, but I wonder whether drawing from that point means that a child attending a publicly funded separate school should not have access to commercial-industrial assessment to support that system.

Mrs Lafarga: I believe that when the extension of funding was granted to the separate schools, though, there were commitments made that it would not be at the expense of the public system. We are not here to comment on that particular point.

Mr Neumann: I see.

Mrs Lafarga: We are here to say that it should not be at our expense and we are showing, through our figures, that in fact it is at the expense of the public school taxpayers. We do not think that is right.

Mr Neumann: Perhaps I did not follow the brief closely enough, but could you reiterate exactly the evidence you have just alluded to, where you are indicating that the move towards this is at the expense of the public system? What documentation do you have?

Mrs Lafarga: In "Pooling One"?

Mr Neumann: Yes.

Mr Head: In the pooling study we talk about a \$274-million shortfall based on real figures as opposed to the estimates. We do indicate that we have a more final study that will be available to us. It is not an easy thing to document when you do board-by-board analysis, but it will be available, hopefully by November. It will, I think, more than justify what we are saying here in fairly low estimates. I think the facts will speak for themselves. Once you look at those pooling models, I think you will realize that it could even be a bigger problem.

Mr Neumann: You are suggesting here that you are not opposed to the sharing of the

assessment but that there should be a greater provincial guarantee that in moving towards that the public system is not—

Mrs Lafarga: We have asked for a very accurate analysis of the figures because both "Pooling One" and the estimates that the government announced in the budget were based on 1988 estimates and since that time there have been a number of new programs mandated. There have also been quite dramatic increases in board budgets this year. I believe that the estimates did not take in the opportunity for partnerships and some of the transfer of telegraph and telephone because there was no way of estimating those things.

What we are saying is that those estimates are probably not very true estimates. Also, in the separate school zones there was no estimate of amounts for that particular initiative that we call "Pooling Two," and we feel that both of those things, plus the impact of the potential outcome of the court case, will have a very dramatic effect on public school boards.

Mr Neumann: Do I have time for one more?

The Vice-Chairman: Not really, unless it is urgent. I have one more questioner.

Mr Neumann: Okay.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. To wrap up with a short question, Mrs O'Neill.

Mrs O'Neill: I do not know whether it will make you happy or sad, and I do not know whether you heard the presentation of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, but your clients do not think that extension has taken place at the cost of the public school system. I do not know what kind of data they are basing it on but their presentation stated it in two places. So your clients are happy with the service they are getting, although they did have a rather, what should I say, contradictory presentation. As we pointed out to them, they did ask for a united school board in the end but had some good things to say about what has been happening in the last two or three years.

I was very happy with the exactness with which you reported Mr Marleau's case. I think it is a case of great significance and I do not think much has been said about it, although he himself did present, as you know.

Could you tell me a little bit about the separate school zones? You are if not the only one, one of the very few who have brought this to our attention. It certainly has many benefits, even administratively from the ministry's point of view, let alone equity. I am wondering how

many. You say that on some boards the impact may be substantial but it does not likely affect many boards. Would you say a little bit about the kinds of effects it may have. Have you got any figures at all about how many boards it may be affecting?

Mr Head: We really only have very preliminary data. It is part and parcel of that overall study. But an initial look would suggest it is mainly in the northern boards but not necessarily. It is probably a fair number. I cannot recall the exact number, because I do not have those figures with me.

Mrs O'Neill: With 170 boards in the province, would it be 25, or is it 50, or 10? I mean, have you any idea?

Mr Head: I do not think it would be more than 25.

Mrs O'Neill: Will you give us the details as soon as you get them?

Mr Head: We would be more than happy to share those data with you.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you.

Ms Penfold: In all fairness, Yvonne, we have only had that announcement for about two weeks, but the ministry intends to change the—

The Vice-Chairman: I do not think Yvonne was criticizing, just asking.

Mrs O'Neill: No, I was not, but you have highlighted it, you have taken half a page in your brief to talk about it and, as I say, you were one of the few that has. So I just wondered if you had done more than I on this subject. I am not criticizing what you have there.

Mr Head: We know that the moment there will be a share of industrial and commercial assessment it will automatically take away from the public board. We have not heard an announcement about that particular redress, which gives us some concern. It may be that it had not been quite thought of, but just in terms of our own analysis of what has happened with the pooling, public taxes are higher. That is a fact.

Ms Penfold: If I may just finish my point, Mr Chairman, in view of the fact that we have only had that information for a couple of weeks, the problem is that the government is saying there is no impact when in fact an impact analysis has not been done by anyone.

Mrs O'Neill: Excuse me, most of these boards that are mentioned here that I know of on maps, at least, are from low assessment based areas. I think that your highlighting of it being a real difficulty with pooling or sharing, or however

you want to use that term, I would like to see—I do think that was one of the considerations why this was done and, as I say, I think it is rather an outdated method of determining separate school supporters now that we have completion.

I also have difficulty—when you say that public school mill rates have gone up, separate school mill rates have gone up just about as equally this year in almost every jurisdiction. So even with the new initiatives towards the support of separate school education, there does seem to be this greater expectation and greater desire to serve the needs within their communities. All ratepayers, I think, across this province were feeling it this year.

Mr Head: Just to comment on that, I think, yes, we are opposed to pooling. Why? Because we believe that the moment the pooling takes place, we know what the effect is going to be on public boards, and so I think that is the whole basis of our proposal. It is not that both systems do not need more.

The Vice-Chairman: I do not know why in the last 10 minutes I feel like I have totally lost control; I am going to wrest it back. Thank you very much for your presentation, once again, and for taking the time to be here.

The select committee on education will recess until 10 am tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1710.

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Martin, Bill, President, Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation

Penfold, Helen, President, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario





No. E-15

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Select Committee on Education

Education Financing

Ministry of Education

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 3 October 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 3 October 1989

The committee met at 1010 in committee room 1.

EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

The Acting Chairman (Mrs O'Neill): Welcome to the select committee on education on this beautiful morning of 3 October 1989. We have a few vacancies in the seats around this table, but I am assured by the offices of these good people that they will be along very shortly, and they will all have access, of course, to your written brief. I would like to begin because if I do not, it really backs our morning up. I presume it would best to begin by your introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and identifying your spokesperson.

METROPOLITAN SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr Botticella: My name is Chris Botticella. I am presently the vice-chairman of the Metropolitan Separate School Board. Please allow me to introduce my colleagues. On my left is Dr A. J. Barone, director of education, and on my right is A. S. Meneguzzi, deputy director and treasurer of our board.

It is not my intention to read our entire brief, but I would like to highlight some important factors of our message. The Metropolitan Separate School Board was incorporated in 1953. Throughout Metropolitan Toronto, the board exercises the powers and fulfils the duties of an urban separate school board, educating more than 104,000 students in 192 elementary schools and 36 secondary schools. We employ approximately 12,000 people.

Included in these totals are six French-language elementary schools and one French-language secondary school. We welcome the opportunity to present our positions to this select committee.

Many of the issues outlined in this brief have been raised on other occasions but, when considered as a whole, can be viewed as reflecting concerns regarding the equity and adequacy of educational financing. These terms can be understood as the receipt by school boards of adequate, fairly distributed provincial funding to execute the educational responsibilities and

expectations mandated by the Ministry of Education.

School boards increasingly have been required to implement new provincial initiatives, establish programs or carry out basic, legislated board responsibilities without sufficient financial support. The school boards that experience the greatest financial difficulties are assessment-poor boards, many of which are separate school boards.

Most boards are spending above the current level of elementary and secondary ceilings, and costs in excess of the grant ceiling must be fully borne by the local ratepayer. Provincial funding levels must be addressed and increased to provide equitable funding to all boards so that there is no great disparity between total funds available to coterminous boards.

In the Metro area, the following were the operating per-pupil funds in 1988. At the elementary level, the Metropolitan Separate School Board spent \$3,840 per pupil, whereas the Metro public boards spent a total of \$5,189, which makes for a difference of \$1,349. At the secondary level, our board spent \$4,649 per pupil. The Metro public board spent \$6,809, which produces a significant difference of \$2,160.

The proposed pooling of corporate assessment and the sharing of revenue is a most welcome announcement. It is noted that all things being equal, this initiative will increase the revenue for six years to the Metropolitan Separate School Board by \$67 per pupil per year, or approximately \$400 per pupil at the end of the six-year phase-in period. This increase will still leave a sizeable difference in the revenue per pupil between the coterminous boards and the Metropolitan Separate School Board. The current initiatives to introduce greater equity into educational finance should be vigorously pursued. The balance between provincial and local funding should be readjusted.

Our brief reflects these concerns through the examination of changes required to general legislative grants regulation, capital grant plan guidelines, corporate assessment pooling and the Development Charges Act, which is Bill 20.

The first issue is the timing of general legislative grant announcements. Each year the

Ministry of Education releases the regulations regarding general legislative grants which affect the financial position of school boards. For the last ten years these regulations have been released on average 74 days into the new fiscal year or on 15 March. These consistent, untimely delays respecting the provision of financial guidelines to boards make it extremely difficult for boards to plan and manage their fiscal operations.

These difficulties have greater impact on assessment-poor boards which have greater reliance on grants. A late announcement for 1990 with no lead planning time would create even more serious difficulties than usual, given the proposed introduction of the pooling of commercial assessment. Without timely guidelines, it will be most difficult to predict tax and grant revenues in the forthcoming year.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education release the general legislative grants regulations for the next year by 30 November annually. This will allow us to plan, rather than just react.

With respect to grant advances, the ministry procedures provide grants to school boards, but are deficient in two areas. The first area is that in the first quarter of every year, January to March, school boards experience financial hardship due to the fact that they must fund this time period, which requires 25 per cent of the total prospective funding, with significantly less than this amount. In 1988 the ministry provided only 17 per cent of the grant revenues. Moreover, the 17 per cent financing is based on the previous year's grant.

The ministry withholds seven per cent of grant revenues from school boards each fiscal year. The remainder is forwarded in the following year, when financial statements are submitted. As a result, school boards must borrow additional funds and pay interest on these funds. Since the ministry has the power to make grant adjustments at any time, there is no reason for the grants to be withheld.

Our second recommendation is that the Ministry of Education provide 100 per cent of the grant revenues for school boards on a regular, proportionate basis during the current fiscal year.

The next issue is that of grant ceilings. School boards in the province are spending above the current level of grant ceilings and the local ratepayers must bear 100 per cent of these costs. There are a number of reasons for school boards spending above the grant ceiling, including additional regulated costs, escalating construction costs and, in general, the rising cost of

living. In the Metro Toronto area, the increase of four per cent in base operating grants over 1988 compares with the cost of living increase of six per cent. The main financial problem has been inadequate levels of grant ceilings in light of the current mill rates for recognized expenditures. As a result, the local ratepayer shoulders the financial burden.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education raise grant ceilings to levels which reflect current costs without corresponding increase in the published mill rates for recognized expenditures.

Memorandum 1989: B2, titled The 1989 Enrolment Projections: Certainty in General Legislative Grants Allocation, provides that the transfer payments to school boards in a given year will not be allowed to exceed the allocation for that year. The ministry will amend the general legislative grants regulations at year-end to adjust retroactively the amount of grant to be paid out to school boards where grant requirements of school boards exceed the allocation. Each board's grant entitlement is to be adjusted by an appropriate amount.

It is not clear how an appropriate amount is to be interpreted or what local conditions will be taken into account to make this adjustment, such as unpredictable enrolment growth, escalating construction costs and contract negotiations. It is clear that this measure is draconian and that the financial commitments outlined by the ministry at the beginning of the fiscal year may or may not be met at the end of the year. The B2 memorandum places local financial planning on shifting sand and undermines local fiscal responsibility. This situation is particularly hard on assessment-poor boards that rely heavily on grants.

So we recommend that the Ministry of Education rescind that portion of memorandum B2 which would mandate the retroactive amendment to grant regulations.

The issue of heritage language grants is next. We provide 15 different heritage language programs to approximately 24,400 pupils in 63 different schools, based on an extended day model, as well as providing after-school programs for 6,450 pupils in 63 locations. In total, our board serves 30,865 pupils in 126 locations. These programs receive grants through continuing education.

A number of circumstances, such as grant reductions, inadequate salary and benefit increases and decreases in class size create financial difficulties. We suggest the ministry provide full compensation for instructors' time,

approve crossover time as instructional time and accept professional activity days as instructional days.

Thus, we recommend the Ministry of Education fund heritage language programs using a method similar to that used to fund other continuing education programs. We also recommend that the Ministry of Education provide funding for in-service and professional activity for heritage language instructors.

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The next issue is that of grants for new initiatives. The board recognizes the need for new initiatives. Grants for these initiatives should be provided for the implementation of required programs, including staffing, teacher training, supervision, space and equipment. For example, the initiatives to reduce pupil-teacher ratios not only have to recognize the expense in additional staff but must also address the needs previously mentioned.

In general, where programs are mandated, grants must be adequate, comprehensive, included in each board's ceiling and predicated on the ability to pay. There has been a tendency to introduce incentive grants and then drop them at the end of the incentive period.

Thus we recommend that the Ministry of Education consult school boards regarding new initiatives and provide adequate funds incorporated into the grant ceiling in order to implement and, more important, sustain the initiatives.

Transportation for gifted pupils is also an issue for us. Transportation service is currently provided for special education pupils who are properly identified. Grants for providing bus service for these pupils are furnished through the general legislative grants regulations. However, one category of special education pupil which is excluded from the transportation grant structure and for which bus service is not available is the gifted. Programs for the gifted, like many other special education programs, are regional in nature. The programs are located in designated schools and identified pupils access the program from surrounding schools.

Access for gifted pupils, however, is problematic since grants for bus transportation are not provided. Access for French-language gifted pupils is particularly difficult due to the even fewer gifted centres. Given that gifted pupils are classified as special education pupils and identified through the same procedures as other special education pupils, grants for transporting gifted pupils should be provided.

The Metropolitan Separate School Board recommends that the Ministry of Education amend the general legislative grant regulations to include 100 per cent approval of transportation costs for gifted pupils.

We operate seven French-language schools—six elementary and one secondary—within Metro Toronto. There are two items of particular concern we have regarding Ministry of Education funding. One is the cost of transportation and the other concerns the grant for small schools and small boards.

1. Regular bus transportation, from home to school, is provided for almost 85 per cent of the French-language elementary school resident population and public transit tickets are distributed to resident secondary school students. Transportation is the lifeline to the French-language schools since the entire metropolitan area is serviced by a limited number of schools. It also ensures French-language students equal access to a Catholic education in their first language comparable to that of their English-language counterparts.

However, there are several difficulties related to the provision and funding of appropriate transportation for French-language students. There are few French-language schools and a broad distribution pattern of students, necessitating a heavy reliance on the use of vans. The approved cost for vans is about 15 per cent less than the approved cost for larger vehicles. As a result, the cost for transporting French-language pupils is approximately four times the average cost of transporting English-language pupils.

2. The economy of scale in operating some two per cent of the board's schools and a similar percentage of total enrolment for their French population is acknowledged by the Ministry of Education through the specific dollar-per-pupil grant for small schools and small boards.

The formula for producing grants for small schools excludes the Metropolitan Separate School Board in its elementary panel because of the 8-kilometre location restriction. The small boards formula requires that board enrolment be fewer than 5,000. The inclusion of English pupils in board enrolment precludes us from receiving a grant provided to offset additional administrative costs and to offer community-oriented programs for the French-language-section schools.

Thus we recommend that the Ministry of Education revise its instructions regarding pupil transportation for French-language pupils in view of their unique transportation requirements,

and approve for grant purposes 100 per cent of the actual cost of providing transportation for French-language pupils.

We also recommend that the Ministry of Education, in respect of FLS school funding: (1) revise the definition of a small isolated school to include only the level of enrolment as the basis for grant; and (2) revise the small boards grant calculation to reflect only FLS enrolment.

The next issue is that of capital grant plan guidelines. School boards are required to operate within the guidelines of the capital grant plan with regard to planning, budgeting and designing schools and must also apply for general legislative grants towards the cost of educational facilities. Particular areas of the plan should be amended to further promote funding equity.

When the purchase of a school site is approved for general legislative grant purposes, the capital grant plan provides a formula that determines the amount. The latter is the lesser of (a) the purchase price or (b) the greater of the provincial equalized assessment, and 75 per cent of the appraised land value. The formula produces a figure of 75 per cent of the cost because the cost price and the appraisal value invariably are the same. This situation leaves the school board's share at 25 per cent of the cost plus the board's share of the approved cost. Since other capital approvals can be 90 per cent with reference to alterations or 100 per cent with reference to new construction, it is illogical and inappropriate that sites should be subjected to this funding restriction.

Today, we recommend that the Ministry of Education amend the capital grant plan formula for determining the amount approved for school site purchases to provide an approved cost based on 100 per cent of the appraised value.

The capital grant plan 1989 outlines the minimum-maximum space requirement for pupil accommodation in the primary through senior divisions. These guidelines stipulate pupil loadings that are used in requests for grant approval. The ministry pupil loading is defined as 35 pupils for elementary classrooms and 30 pupils for secondary classrooms, with varied pupil loadings for other programs such as kindergarten, home economics, industrial arts and special vocational programs.

In practice, however, elementary and secondary schools are required by the ministry, pedagogical needs and collective agreement staffing ratios to operate at lower pupil-teacher ratios. Since school boards have difficulty justifying additional space requirements and the need for financial assistance when they are

forced to use unrealistic Ontario Ministry of Education capacity loadings, and since school boards which lease space from coterminous boards could be penalized financially, we recommend that the Ministry of Education amend the capital grant plan to reduce the pupil loading to reflect current educational programs and practices and Ministry of Education mandates.

We have a significant number of school facilities at both the elementary and secondary levels which are 35 years of age or older. These schools have acute renovation needs. Most financing over the last two decades has been targeted for new schools. Many inner-city communities which support older school facilities have witnessed a channelling of funds to other areas while observing the continuing unmet needs of their local schools.

Under present procedures, capital requests for both new construction and renovation projects must be prioritized in the same capital expenditures forecast list. It is necessary to establish, through the capital expenditures forecast process, two separate funding pools to meet both new capital requirements and renovation-alteration needs.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education amend the capital grant plan to establish, through the capital expenditures process, two funding pools, one pool for funding renovation-alteration projects and one pool for funding new capital projects for both elementary and secondary school panels.

Bill 20, the Development Charges Act, is the next issue. The present provincial average rate of grant for first-level recognized extraordinary expenditure is 75 per cent. Legislation regarding the application of educational development charges is now under consideration which would result in a drop of this provincial support to 60 per cent. It is assumed by provincial officials that the loss of provincial support will be offset by the local school board's ability to apply the educational development charge for new construction.

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This initiative, however, is not practical for mature school boards where few new schools will be required. The future accommodation needs of mature boards will be for renovation, retrofit and school additions. These costs will be substantial. Our grant rate is projected to drop from approximately 80 per cent to 69 per cent as a result of the proposed legislation. The loss in revenue required to support board accommodation projects would have to be regained by an

increase in the mill rate. It is certainly an inequitable measure.

Our next recommendation is that in the event that the Development Charges Act is approved by the Ontario Legislature, the Ministry of Education retain the average rate of grant at 75 per cent for a school board's extraordinary expenditure for accommodation projects not subject to the educational development charge.

Pooling of corporate assessment: sharing basis. The Metropolitan Separate School Board is pleased that the pooling of corporate assessment will be implemented in 1990. The proposed basis for the sharing of corporate assessment, however, is to be a ratio of residential assessment. It would be more equitable to amend the sharing formula to an enrolment basis, which would provide a more direct method of calculation and distribution.

As in the past, we recommend that the Education Act be amended with regard to the implementation of the pooling of corporate assessment to designate that the sharing proportion be the respective average daily enrolments for grant purposes as determined by the Ministry of Education for the coterminous boards.

In conclusion, we wish to acknowledge and to thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to ensure that the government's dream of equity and adequacy of educational financing will some day become a reality. As a politician, I recognize and appreciate not only the magnitude of the problem but also the tremendous corporate focus, goodwill and drive needed to make it happen.

The Education Act mandates us many responsibilities, and ratepayers have a multitude of program expectations for their children. We at the Metropolitan Separate School Board are quite eager to carry out our responsibilities and meet those board expectations, but we need your assistance. We need changes that will effect equity and adequacy. We direct you to our 13 recommendations at the end of our printed brief. We strongly feel that if these recommendations are put into effect, we will be one gigantic step closer to realizing our dream, not only for our students but for all students across Ontario.

At this time, I will be more than happy and prepared to answer any and all of your inquiries.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs O'Neill): Thank you very much. As usual, the Metro separate board is articulate, focused and specific. We have two members of the committee who would like to question you. I would suggest each questioner has about five minutes. Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree with the chairman's summary. She has become of like mind with me in the last day or two. I have had a remarkable influence on her, which even she has noted herself.

The Acting Chairman: Not in writing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But it is in Hansard now. I know she cannot get it out.

I want to ask you a few very specific questions, because you have been very specific, and then one general question which I think is begged by your overall presentation.

First, what is the percentage of children in your system who are designated as gifted? Have you any idea?

Mr Barone: Actually, the proportion with regard to special education would be in the area of approximately 12 per cent, and the gifted proportion would fall within that, so it would be a smaller proportion. I cannot give you the specific number.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The reason I ask is that we were given a mass of figures about exceptional students by the government. I have noticed an amazing range in the numbers of exceptional kids in various jurisdictions and the percentage of those who are presumed exceptional and to be under the term "gifted." I just wondered where you fell in that, whether the larger metropolitan areas maybe ended up labelling more kids as gifted because of pressure from parents or whatever. You do say that the IPRC is the determinant. I have a pretty jaundiced view of the IPRC.

Mr Barone: If I might clarify, it falls within the 12 per cent and I would say that that is not unusual for school systems across the province. The gifted would be a portion of that, so I do not believe it is an unusual number being identified.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is the proportion within the 12 per cent that I found more remarkable than the variances between 12 per cent and 20 per cent, but I will leave that.

The heritage language situation concerns me, and you are the first who actually raised it in the specific way you have. Could you give us a little more detail on the problems that are there at the moment in terms of enrolment and in terms of some of the other factors that you just touched on as you went through?

Mr Barone: We have a preference to offer heritage language on the extended-day basis rather than after school and on Saturday. Offering it after school provides problems with regard to transportation of children who live far

from the school. Saturday, again, is somewhat of an imposition on the parents and on the children who have already attended school for five days. So we have really stressed the extended school-day basis.

We have a problem wherein we hire staff as we hire teachers from 1 September to the end of June. We have 10 professional activity days throughout the school year. We also have, for instance, crossover time between classes. If you have a 30-minute period, your next 30-minute period may start on the half-hour, but it takes time; maybe two, three or four minutes for the teacher to change classes, or the students, if the students leave.

Where we are running into a particular problem is that we find that the way it is being recorded and the way we get grants for heritage language does not recognize the fact that in order to operate a school system you hire people for the whole year. For instance, if we have 100 heritage language instructors and, let's say, a heritage language instructor receives—if it were an instructor and not a qualified teacher—\$100 a day, you are looking at \$10,000; and if you are looking at 10 days you are looking at a \$100,000 expenditure. There is no grant for that, even though we do have them under contract and we do want to in-service them, because the grant is based upon the instructional time, and a professional activity day is not determined as instructional time when the records are being reviewed.

In the same fashion, it is very difficult to timetable heritage language. You must realize in the school, of course, you are timetabling 20 minutes for French in the primary junior division, 40 minutes for French as a second language in grade 7 and grade 8, and then if you are educating or offering in-school heritage language, it is 30 minutes. So you have a bit of an administrative problem in the school to arrange this.

What we do is try to parallel it with other programs and ensure that there is minimal disruption. For instance, if we have heritage language from 9 to 9:30 and then we have another class from 9:30 to 10, obviously there is a period of perhaps five minutes on average that actual instruction is not going on.

What has happened is that it has been calculated. A time study has been done and our board has suffered a loss in grants because of this, because there has been a calculation made that they are not receiving exactly 30 minutes. It is very difficult to timetable and we feel that that is part of the school day.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will not get into my general questions. Instead, I will just ask another specific one. It is around the small-school grant question. You presently get money, some secondary money, under this program, as does the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, although you obviously have enrolments of over 5,000 in total. I am not sure of all the niceties of the regs that differentiate between the elementary panel and the secondary panel, but looking at the list of school boards in Ontario that do not get that grant because of the distance factor, what you are suggesting would add an enormous financial burden on to the taxpayers in terms of not just your board, which might be seen by other boards, with its very large economic base, especially in the next six years—in comparison with other boards, it seems like a strange way to ask for it, for isolation purposes rather than for a specific grant around the specific nature of the French school, which there are some grants for, separately from it.

I wanted to hear your comments about that, because it seems a little bizarre hearing from Metro a rationale for small-school status, isolated school status, both because of its implications in general but also because of the reality or seeming reality of Metro.

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Mr Meneguzzi: Obviously this particular concern addresses the French section. The Metropolitan Separate School Board has 250 square miles of area; we have very few elementary schools and even fewer secondary schools. The secondary school applies for the sparse school board, but in the elementary it does not. Yet the distance between the location where the child comes from and the school is quite great. Therefore, the number of students in each of the individual schools is small, which means that the fixed costs are very expensive relative to the variable costs.

When you open a school you have to have a caretaker, a principal, a secretary, and then your variable costs are your teachers. Where the school is small, those costs then become very expensive per pupil. Basically, that is what we are addressing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you have figures that you can provide us in terms of your estimated shortfalls? I do not know what the proper expression would be for this.

Mr Meneguzzi: Not handy.

Mr Botticella: We could forward them to you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you could forward them to us, that would be great.

Mr Keyes: Just very quickly, because of time, I will ask a general question that is quite frequently posed. These are very specific things you have brought to us, and I am sure ministry people will look at them. Have you given any thought to requesting a change of fiscal year, as has been recommended by several groups, rather than just advancing grants and knowledge sooner?

Mr Meneguzzi: Yes. It has not been discussed officially at the board level, but certainly it has at the staff level. The fiscal year-end is a very interesting possibility. What it would do, in my opinion, is require school boards to really plan budgets in advance. In our presentations here, we have indicated that the planning of a budget is an important and beneficial situation. Therefore, the change in the fiscal year-end, I believe, would contribute to having to prepare budgets in advance. I think it is a positive direction.

Mr Keyes: The other one is just on the whole philosophy of maintaining the system, which has been criticized by so many, on the property tax basis, even the pooling of assessment, etc, and looking at that to the extension of it, even in Metro, where you are still, in the opinion of many, "assessment-rich," even when the pooling comes through versus the other areas of the province—the whole philosophy of that. Have you given any additional thought to it?

Mr Meneguzzi: I think our position would be that education is a provincial matter, allocated to the individual school boards. Unfortunately, the responsibility has been mandated to the individual school boards, but the resources available have not gone along with that responsibility. The anomaly, of course, has been that some individual school boards, depending on where they are located, because of the huge corporate assessment, etc, have been very fortunate whereas other boards have not.

I think there is a positive direction being implemented by pooling, but I do not think at this point that it will achieve the total desired end. But it is going in the right direction.

As far as Bill 20 is concerned, philosophically our board is opposed to it. In the practical order, if necessary, then I guess we have the position that some of the mechanics may have to be improved.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you very much for your presentation. I am back to pooling. I notice here that you would like to see it on a per-student

basis rather than on the ratio of residential assessment. Have you got computer runs to give us what might be the difference here?

Mr Meneguzzi: I imagine we could generate something of that nature. Here, again, I think our philosophy initially is that revenue should be pupil-generated, and costs obviously are going to be pupil-generated. So we think they should be parallel, not the queer situation that because a school board is located in a wealthy area as compared to another school board in a less wealthy area yet they have the same number of pupils and the cost per pupil and the revenue per pupil vary so differently and education is a provincial matter.

Mr Villeneuve: You touch on the cost of transportation. Is it about four times as much for French separate school students as for other students in your system or in the public system?

Mr Barone: In the brief it indicated that it was compared to other students in our system. I think the reason was particularly the use of vans and, I guess, the distances travelled.

Mr Villeneuve: Further on that particular point, the use of vans quite obviously is done for, I guess, some economic reasons: you do not need a larger vehicle. Is there any special reason why the ministry is funding them at 75 per cent as opposed to—

Mr Meneguzzi: I think it is part of the regulations that apply to the transportation situation. I cannot clarify that further.

Mr Villeneuve: Final question: You are not in favour of lot levies. Quite obviously we will be having to look at different ways of funding. Instead of lot levies, would you be receptive to newly created or unimproved lots, to land transfer tax support of the school system as opposed to a lot levy, which you appear not to favour at this stage of the game?

Mr Botticella: It is very difficult for us to answer that question because we do not really understand the details or the implications of it, but we would certainly be more than happy to look at it.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much, gentlemen. We will certainly take your recommendations under consideration.

The Durham Board of Education, please. I presume we are speaking with Mr Brown and Ms Laing. Maybe you would like to identify yourselves. Welcome to the select committee. For the purposes of Hansard, read in your names.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Brown: I am Ian Brown, chairperson of the board, and accompanying me today is Pauline Laing, our director of education.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the Durham board this morning on the financing of elementary and secondary education. Frankly, I do not envy you the task of digesting dozens of briefs, many expressing contradictory points of view, and then formulating a set of recommendations for the government, many of which may never be implemented.

The Acting Chairman: Just as we are beginning to write, you tell us these things.

Mr Brown: While a cynic might suggest that yet another plea for increased provincial funding will fall on deaf ears, we believe so strongly in the value of public education and are so concerned about its continued viability that we feel we must share the board's concerns.

We are concerned first about the apparent lack of a blueprint or master plan for the future direction of education in Ontario. There is the perception that many of the decisions made about education are politically and economically driven and in fact have very little foundation in educational philosophy or pedagogy.

We believe that rather than responding in a knee-jerk fashion to social problems as they become politically troublesome, like the shortage of day care, drug abuse or the spread of AIDS, and expecting school boards to provide remedies to such monumental problems, what are needed are long-term policy objectives. We urge the government to set clear limits on what it expects schools to achieve.

We cannot be all things to all people. We cannot solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown, teenage pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Their solutions surely are a shared responsibility of individuals, families, organized religion, business, the community and society at large. Yet increasingly school boards are expected to assume functions of a social, cultural and health nature while continuing to emphasize the so-called basics.

Programs appear to be added in an ad hoc manner, with no master plan. The result is to doom the education system to failure. Band-Aid solutions serve only to raise public expectations to an unreasonable level, and we simply cannot deliver the goods. The public becomes increasingly critical, cynical and disaffected.

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Compounding the problem for school boards is the limited consultation on the part of the provincial government, coupled with speedy implementation schedules and woefully inadequate financial support. Let us consider a partial list of recently mandated provincial initiatives:

1. Curriculum: Within the recent past, boards have been required to introduce new programs in language arts, family and consumer studies, science, business education, English, mathematics, history, geography, technical studies, visual arts, computer literacy, student retention and transition to work, AIDS instruction and drug education. Each of these programs carries a considerable cost: the salary of the consultant who must rewrite the curriculum documents, provision of in-service training for teachers and new textbooks and resource materials.

2. OAC textbooks: The cost to the Durham property owners of this initiative was \$300,000 in 1988 and an estimated \$260,000 in 1989.

3. Reduction of primary class sizes: Government assistance contributes to the cost of salaries only, and the costs of portable accommodation, furniture, equipment and ongoing maintenance are left to local boards.

4. Junior kindergarten and all-day senior kindergarten: The costs of implementing this initiative in Durham are expected to be staggering. Accommodation alone will require the purchase of over 100 additional portables. In our 1989 budget, we have allocated \$1 million to address this future liability. We have serious doubts too about our ability to hire enough qualified teachers.

5. Changes in equalized assessment, the apportionment guarantee and the introduction of market value assessment all have significant financial impact on the Durham board.

6. The increase in provincial sales tax had a major impact on our purchasing power.

7. Compliance with changes in provincial safety codes, building codes, fire marshal regulations and the workplace hazardous materials information system legislation account for a notable portion of our plant operations and maintenance budgets.

8. Employee benefits: Amendments to the Teachers' Superannuation Act necessitated huge payouts from our retirement gratuity reserves as teachers took advantage of provincial legislation to retire early from the profession without incurring pension penalties, and now we face a critical shortage of teachers. Pay equity legislation, Workers' Compensation Board premium

increases and the introduction of a payroll tax to fund OHIP add further to local boards' costs, costs over which they have no control.

While some of the government's initiatives are laudable, we simply require additional funding to sustain these initiatives, and we need time to respond. OSIS was just nicely under way when the government responded to the Radwanski recommendations and introduced destreaming. Please give us time to catch our breath. New directives are thrust at us repeatedly, and trustees, administrators and teachers alike are throwing up their hands in despair and frustration. There is growing support for the tactic of simply delaying the implementation of newly announced programs, since there is reason to believe that something else will be announced next week or next month which will send us spinning in yet another direction.

We support the use of pilot programs in selected boards rather than immediate province-wide adoption of new programs. An absolutely essential component of any and all new initiatives is a formalized evaluation. Develop a master plan for education in the province and tell us what it is. Consult with local school boards prior to instituting any initiatives, provide us with a long lead-in time for implementation, pilot test and evaluate them first and provide adequate ongoing funding. Surely that is not too much to expect.

Far too often, programs are introduced and some incentive funding is provided for the first year. Subsequently, the cost of such new programs is absorbed into the general legislative grants, and the local share of funding these programs increases proportionately.

You have heard much in these hearings about the overall decline in the province's share of education funding. You have heard the expressions of frustration and disappointment that the government has failed to honour its promise to return to the 60 per cent level of contribution. The Durham board adds its voice to those who seek a more equitable funding level of actual costs.

We support the establishment of realistic per-pupil expenditure ceilings which more accurately reflect the costs of educating students in today's society.

We continue to oppose coterminous pooling of commercial and industrial assessment because we are very sceptical of the former Minister of Education's assurances that no public board will suffer a loss of revenue due to the effects of pooling. What will be the source of the revenue

to fund such a guarantee? We are concerned that public school ratepayers will provide an indirect subsidy to separate school education. Our calculations support those of other presenters before this committee and indicate clearly that the proposed compensation of \$180 million will create a shortfall of at least \$20 million.

We believe, simply, that the citizens of Ontario cannot afford two publicly funded school systems. We are concerned about the tremendous waste when services and programs are duplicated, and in Durham we have taken meaningful steps to reduce such duplication. With our coterminous board we share computer services, courier service, a film library and some transportation routes. We believe that further services can potentially be shared and would support a government plan to investigate the merits of a unified school board. We support too the alignment of the fiscal year with the school year and urge the committee to seriously consider that recommendation.

You have heard too during these hearings about the desperate need for more money for capital construction, new pupil places, renovations and upgrading of ageing facilities and business and technical equipment which reflects at least current technological advances.

The Durham Board of Education is growing at the rate of 1,500 pupils a year. Currently, 11,000 of our 52,000 students are accommodated in portable classrooms. This year we added 40 more portables to our schools, bringing the total to 410, the equivalent of 34 new schools. The increasing use of portables encroaches on playing fields and is a source of aggravation to those ratepayers whose homes are adjacent to school grounds. Additional acreage must be purchased in order to site the portables and, as yet, there is no legislative mechanism requiring developers to dedicate land for school purposes. Our capital forecast for the next five years totals \$237.4 million. We urge the government to adjust its classroom loading factors from the unrealistic 35 students per class to something consistent with mandated lower class sizes.

While Ministry of Education statistics indicate an increase in provincial support of 6.9 per cent over 1988, the figures are misleading. Category 1 funding, which is 86 per cent of our budget in Durham, was actually reduced by three per cent in 1989. Ministry financing has been described as smoke and mirrors and a shell game, and those are the complimentary terms. The fact is that public school boards are hurting and so are our local ratepayers. Trustees increasingly hear

rumblings of a taxpayers' revolt and we work hard to fend it off. Nevertheless, a mill rate increase of 14.5 per cent last year does not sit well with anyone.

The Durham Board of Education has extremely sound fiscal management. We tolerate no waste, excesses or unnecessary expenditures. Our approach to financing is characterized as cautious conservatism. We have not debentured since 1972 and by 1992 will have retired our debenture debt. Further, we use reserves to fund tomorrow's liabilities.

We are doing our share to provide first-rate education in this province. We fully understand the competing demands for scarce dollars, but seriously question what priority education has in this province. We ask that you help the government make it a top priority. The future of this country may very well depend on it.

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Ms Laing: I am Pauline Laing, the director of education for the Durham Board of Education. Our chairperson has given you a brief but succinct overview of our concerns. What I would like to do is make these points a little more vivid by telling you about specific situations that we in Durham have experienced that lend weight to his arguments.

Since rapid growth is a key feature of the Durham situation, I would like to illustrate how a lack of long-term plans affects our capital program. This year, we received approval to build a new high school, or rather two thirds of a high school. That is the problem. We were assured of phases 1 and 2 but were given no guarantee that phase 3 would follow. We must proceed because overcrowding is acute and we must build the whole school because the site accommodates only a three-storey building. We must assume that completion will be a priority, but we believe that good planning should avoid the climate of uncertainty that we have experienced around the school.

Mr Brown referred to unrealistic classroom loading factors. This inadequate method of calculating school size leaves boards in the unenviable position of opening new schools with multiple portables on the property and living with the community assumption that the board employs very bad planners.

I would like to take the case of S. A. Cawker school in Port Perry. When we were seeking approval, we predicted that this school would have 489 students when it opened in the fall of 1989. Its actual population was 500, very close to our estimate. That school is divided into two

kindergarten classes averaging 23 students, seven primary classes averaging 24, six junior division classes averaging 28.5 and three intermediate division classes averaging 29 students, along with three special education classes averaging eight students.

All the class sizes conform to regulations or approximate ministry recommendations and our predictions of the total population were accurate. However, the school had to open with five portables because the building approved ignored reality and assumed an unrealistic number of students per classroom.

Formulae are equally in need of revision to accommodate new program needs. When building a high school in 1990 business machines are hardly appropriate, yet business machines are the standard by which equipment costs are calculated. Computers are our current need, and we need speedy changes in the equipment specifications to provide for the kind of equipment that is appropriate to new programs.

We talk about producing a world-class labour force, and to do so we need up-to-date equipment. Mr Brown also talked about the increasing breadth of the educational mandate. It is not only the cost of developing materials in some of these areas, but the substantial staff costs to provide the co-ordination we require with outside agencies. Day care is an example.

Our buildings must now be built with these facilities, which unquestionably are put to good use by the community. Although the school board does not have direct responsibility for day care, it is foolhardy to assume that we can have a service for children provided in our buildings without significant liaison with day care staff and operators. Substantial amounts of senior staff time are required.

Another example is school-to-work transition, which requires widespread community contacts with business and industry. We believe that planning should take into account these complicated connections and acknowledge the costs. In addition, we have worked with Durham College to establish a program for early identification of students interested in apprenticeships. Many hours of staff time, theirs and ours, were required.

We have also mentioned shifting funding. This year, for example, we received more assistance with the purchase of computers. We spent the full amount we were allowed because the money was earmarked and saving there would not have meant more elsewhere. But provincially, boards received less than last year

to put towards the costs that do not go away: salaries, heat, lights, continuation of staff development and program writing. Computers are an excellent resource, but they do not keep the pipes from freezing.

One of our points is support for pilot testing of new initiatives. Our understanding is that in implementing The Transition Years, the Ministry of Education may fund projects in various boards that will help define directions and strategies within this new single-stream program. We hope that this is the direction taken and that implementation will be shaped by the experience of the boards. We are prepared, with reasonable financial support, to do our share in exploring new directions and communicating our findings to the ministry and to other boards.

There are many other practical examples, and I am sure that Ian and I would be glad to answer questions.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you, Ms Laing, for helping your brief to come alive. I almost denied you the opportunity.

Mr Furlong: Ian and Pauline, welcome to the committee. I guess I can say I have heard a lot of this before, and it would be an understatement. Pauline, with your predecessor, I even had the occasion to visit several schools within the system and was shown at first hand some of the problems you have identified.

I would like to ask you two questions. The first deals with your comments regarding the 60 per cent level of provincial contribution to actual costs. We have heard that mentioned a number of times in the last few weeks. One of the difficulties of that is 60 per cent of what? Is it 60 per cent of a blank cheque?

We have other institutions that are funded by government—by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services—where operations are run by volunteer boards of directors and we say to them, “Here is a budget and you operate within that budget.” They cannot do anything about it because they do not have the authority to tax.

You as a trustee, however, have that authority and if you are negotiating your collective agreements—I am sort of being a devil’s advocate here—I am saying that we get the impression sometimes that you do not give a damn about what that is going to cost because you can tack it on to the taxpayer. You now come to us and say, “Our actual costs are \$6,000 per student and you are granting \$4,000,” and you are saying, “You should contribute more.”

My question to you is, where do you draw the line? Is it that you attempt to come up with some more realistic grant ceilings and, if you do, can we come up with some solution where we say: “This is it. From here on in, this is what you get and you will never get another cent”? I do not know. I would just like your comments on that.

Mr Brown: I guess I would turn it back to Premier Peterson and ask him what he meant when he promised to return to the 60 per cent level.

Mr Furlong: I think he said of approved costs, but that is—

Interjections.

The Acting Chairman: Gentlemen, we will save that discussion for later, please. Let’s have the delegate’s answer.

Mr Brown: Movement on ceilings would certainly be a major step. You have heard from other presenters, I think, that 90 per cent or 88 per cent of boards in the province are exceeding the ceilings, and so on. I think they are unrealistic and I think they need to be adjusted to reflect the increased costs that boards are incurring, largely as a result of increased provincial mandates and expectations. I think that is probably a first reasonable step to take.

Mr Furlong: Are you concerned with the accountability? Suppose the provincial government were to do that and were paying most of the shot, are you concerned about the role of the trustees, whether some of the autonomy would be affected by that kind of move?

Mr Brown: I do not think the accountability of trustees is going to be affected significantly by such a move. I know we are highly accountable now to our local ratepayers. In some cases, we are taking a great deal of heat for the kind of increase we are imposing on them. We are trying to deflect that, of course, to other levels of government—

Mr Furlong: I have noticed.

Mr Brown: —sometimes successfully and sometimes not. I do not think the accountability issue is going to be a big one.

Mr Furlong: All right. The second question I have has to do with this: You share some services with your coterminous boards and in your brief you indicate that this should be explored further. Are there other things that come to mind that you could share at this time? Could you enlighten the committee as to what you are thinking about?

Mr Brown: I think some of the costs of developing programs, for example, that are

going to be implemented in both boards, curriculum programs. Some of the middle management costs, for example, and things like transportation services could probably be co-ordinated between the two boards rather than having twice the number of people involved.

Ms Laing may want to comment further on some possible initiatives.

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Ms Laing: I do not have anything to add to the ones you have mentioned. They are the most obvious ones.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can I get into it now? No, I want to save that for later.

The Acting Chairman: No, I think we will wait until another day.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You very accurately put your finger on the problems, however, and we have actually lately had some good suggestions about how ceilings can be established and a new process for it that would involve the players more and therefore, presumably, get rid of some of the problems of accountability that exist there at the moment.

I would suggest that one of the difficulties with inadequate ceilings is that the taxpayer does not know whom to hold accountable. You may feel you are accountable, but I do not think they know where to go, to attack you for your 14 per cent increase or Mr Furlong and his government. I just do not think they know how to focus these days.

Your area has a lot of special needs kids and I did not hear any comments from you around the rolling of the special ed grants or the trainable retarded grants into the general legislative grants now and what impact that is going to have on you as a board. Other boards with similar kinds of institutional bases within them have actually come to us with some pretty startling dollar figures for dollar loss that they are expecting as a result of that rolling in. I wonder if you have done an analysis of this to know what your situation is going to be in Durham.

Ms Laing: We have looked at that situation and indeed it does concern us. I am not carrying the figures with me this morning. We have approximately seven per cent of the population that is identified as special needs, which require a very heightened level of service within the system. I do not know, just replying to your initial comment, whether that is a significantly higher level than other boards you have heard from. We are concerned about that and we could provide an analysis with specific figures if that would be of use to the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested at some point, although it may be too late for our report. I was just thinking about institutions like Whitby Psychiatric Hospital and the number of institutions for mental retardation that are within your area. There may be an impact. Actually, seven per cent is low in the average for special ed identification in the province.

What was the impact on class size in the junior and intermediate sections of the grades 1 and 2 reductions, which I presume you participated in, according to your brief? Some boards have told us that in fact they have seen increases in both the junior and intermediate sections as a result of shifts that were made to accommodate the grades 1 and 2 reductions.

Ms Laing: The Durham board certainly took advance steps towards reduction of primary class sizes, really in advance of provincial initiatives because we saw its educational value. At the same time, there were guidelines applicable to junior and intermediate classes as well. So there was a planned total program of decline in size for primary that was managed, to avoid the particular problem you are dealing with.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Okay. The final thing would be, your brief very categorically and strongly speaks about your financial accountability and your conservatism, that terrible word.

Mr Villeneuve: Come on, come on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It brought Mr Villeneuve to life there when he heard it being used.

I wonder if you have ever done a comprehensive audit of programs in your jurisdiction or what your feelings are about the need for that element of audit, which seems to be missing within the education system at the moment, in terms of quality of program and value for the buck in the larger terms that we are now using in many other instances in the public domain, and whether you, on your own basis, have decided to investigate that for your own purposes, or what your comments are in terms of our incorporating that kind of notion in our report.

Mr Brown: I would suggest that we do that on an annual basis when we deliberate over our budget. I think every program is scrutinized carefully for its educational merits and its financial viability.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But that is not external. That is an internal process.

Mr Brown: That is internal, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am talking more about what we are now doing more of in government, which is bringing in external audit teams to do

comprehensive audits rather than just straight financial audits. That is something which is not found within education. One can make the argument from the government's side that the ceilings are adequate for the programs that are being funded. Everybody else on the other side is saying they are inadequate, but there is no notion of whether or not the dollars involved are affecting the quality of the program very directly.

We have never done that kind of an audit of it. Special ed is a perfect example. The information we have in this wonderful black book indicates that boards across the province are interpreting special ed incredibly differently. They are providing very different kinds of solutions to the same kinds of problems that are being presented to them, and yet no one has done that kind of an audit of the system to know what direction we should be moving in five years after Bill 82 was brought in. I guess that is the point I was trying to raise, what your feelings are about that kind of an audit process being brought into the system and how you react to it from Durham's point of view.

Ms Laing: I would certainly have to consider what you mean by a program. I am not sure whether you mean student learning programs that would have some component of student achievement, or if you are talking about building programs and how well they are managed, that kind of thing. I would need to think specifically about different areas. The area you mention, special education, always has a lot of external scrutiny because of its close association with provincial associations that form part of the special education advisory committees within each board. There is certainly a high level of interest in the type of service being provided.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The SEACs were one of the groups that were concerned that depending on the board, their role was very different and their building did actually evaluate. The problematic results were very different and that was one of the reasons we raised it.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Kozyra, a very short question, I hope.

Mr Kozyra: Perhaps.

The Acting Chairman: You are not going to promise.

Mr Kozyra: You gave some direction towards a government master plan and called for one. A commentator this morning on Canada AM, in relation to the general sales tax, used this concept: He said, "Perhaps it is not the tax revolt that we need, but a spending revolt." I would like to apply that concept to some of the things you

said. You said education cannot be all things to all people. That is what we are trying to do but you feel it cannot.

At the same time, on page 4 you indicate that if you provide adequate, ongoing funding—you seem to suggest that if the funding is there, we will continue to try to be all things to all people. In pursuit of that, if you were developing and had that input to this master plan, I would like your preferred direction. Would you prefer to streamline education to cut back on those aspects that try to be all things to all people? What would you do with those programs? Do you offload on other agencies and thereby continue to drain the bigger pot, or do you, as you said, evaluate and actually cut some or a lot of these programs now being offered?

Mr Brown: Local boards could go either way, but I think what is necessary is some direction from the provincial government in terms of what the expectations are for education. If we are expected to be all things to all people and the funds are provided, then we will try our best to do that. Under the current situation, I think we are caught between a rock and a hard place. The expectations are there but the funding is not. It is not even clear what the expectations are. Some of the programs have a social nature to them, a social services nature; others seem to be more purely educational in tone. I guess it is not clear from our perspective what the big picture is as far as the province is concerned. Clarification on that, I think, will go a long way to help.

Mr Kozyra: You are prepared to tackle the broad spectrum of expectations provided the funding is there. From the educational sense, from the director of education, do you prefer more the narrower back-to-the-basics handling of issues or the broad range with the proper funding?

Ms Laing: I think schools are never immune from the influence on children of a variety of things in our society. We must always be concerned about those. The degree to which we have active partners in the enterprise is the issue. The degree to which those partnerships are defined and funded is always a question we are interested in. So I am not prepared to say schools should retreat to either new or old basics.

The Acting Chairman: I thank you very much, Mr Kozyra, for being brief.

Mr Villeneuve: In your presentation, you suggest or you oppose coterminous pooling of commercial-industrial assessment. Is it strictly a

status quo you are in favour of or would you look at it to some degree in some changes?

Mr Brown: I think our preference would be the status quo. That is unlikely to be the case. Given that likely scenario, we would prefer some modifications in terms of how it is going to be implemented.

Mr Villeneuve: I do not believe you have touched on lot levies, and certainly from the statistics you give us you have fully 20 per cent of your students in portables, equating to 34 new schools which is a pretty astronomical figure, probably one of the higher boards in that situation across Ontario because of very rapid growth. Could you comment on lot levies, the possibility of lot levies, how it would affect your board and how you would—

Mr Furlong: Let him answer.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you, Allan—divvy up the funds that would be accumulating?

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Mr Brown: We appeared before the developmental charges committee while looking into Bill 20 and are supporting the collection of lot levies by school boards. Our major concern with that is how it is going to be shared with our coterminous board and how expenditures are going to be withdrawn from that account. But certainly, because of the growth we are experiencing in Durham, both the public board and the separate board are fully supportive of that opportunity to increase our revenue.

Mr Villeneuve: Have you ever considered the possibility of going to land transfer tax additions to all property transfers as opposed to the creation of lot levies on unimproved lots, newly created lots?

Mr Brown: We have not discussed that in any kind of formal way. It certainly would bear some investigation, I think.

Mr Villeneuve: I can appreciate where you are coming from and why lot levies are positive to you. I would suggest to you that the majority of school boards across Ontario are negative to the suggestion.

Mr Brown: Yes.

The Acting Chairman: There seems to be some hesitancy on the North York Board of Education's entrance into this room.

Mr Keyes: They are plotting their strategy.

The Acting Chairman: Would the North York board please come into the room?

Mr Keyes: Mr Johnston is priming them first.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just briefing them on how to deal with you, Yvonne.

The Acting Chairman: I thought there must be problem here because they are the most reluctant presenters we have had in the entire series.

Mr Villeneuve: Just wait until they get going.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just lurking out there is what they were doing.

The Acting Chairman: I know some of you by face and not others. It is always helpful if you identify yourselves for the purposes of Hansard. I welcome you to the select committee.

NORTH YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Filion: I am John Filion, chairman of the North York Board of Education. On my right is Veronica Lacey, director of education for North York. To her right is Ted Gould, who is our assistant superintendent of planning and development. On my left is Elsa Chandler, who is chair of our budget committee, and further to my left is Earl Law, who is our superintendent of business services.

We are here today to tell you that just as this century has almost run its course, so have the traditional 20th-century methods of financing public education. Education financing needs an overhaul. If we are to remain competitive and if our students are to have a place in the 21st century, our nation, our province and our city must work together to provide the resources.

Here are a few things we believe should be considered: a commissioned study to re-examine the school board's role in society in light of expanding expectations; funding that recognizes a range of future as well as current needs; regular meetings between local boards of education and various provincial ministries to ensure greater collaboration and consultation; the encouragement of school boards' entrepreneurial initiatives and recognition of local boards as the best service providers to meet local educational needs.

Why do we believe this? Education in Metropolitan Toronto is highly complex. We have challenges others do not: a large influx of immigrant and refugee students; large pockets of economically disadvantaged residents; language barriers; ageing buildings and the promotion of racial harmony in our schools, to mention a few. As a result, we spend a lot more money in areas not associated with traditional education.

Hungry children are poor learners. Often our principals scurry to make sure students are properly fed and clothed. One quarter of our students—that is, 15,000 students out of our

60,000—are learning to speak English. We have to pay for special services to teach them English before we can teach them anything else. Out of our 169 public schools, 127 are more than 25 years old and several are more than 60 years old. They need renovation or replacement. Last year we did not get one cent from the province for capital programs, not one cent.

The province must recognize that it costs more to provide individual programs for students who come from a range of socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Consider the changes taking place in one grade 4 public school classroom in Don Mills. In September, 29 students registered. They came from eight different countries and represented 12 different languages. Seven could not speak English. The children live in everything from subsidized high-rise apartments to \$450,000 homes.

By November, six will have left the school and will probably be replaced by four English-as-a-second-language students and two refugees. Their teacher, meanwhile, may be brand-new to the profession. The example we gave was for Don Mills, but in other parts of the city, the changes are even more extreme.

Social change requires special programs and services. Increased services mean an increase in costs. The irony is that as we have become more urban and our needs have increased, we have seen provincial funding stop dead in North York. We believe government funding should recognize the new demands placed on us. We are experiencing dramatic demographic changes which drive the programs we offer and the way we offer them.

For example, we have an enrolment of 4,000 regular day adult students, not including our 82,000 adult and continuing education students, 90 school-based child care centres and 3,000 senior students. The requirements placed on the system as a result of changes in the family structure have added to our pressures. The dramatic growth of our immigrant and refugee student populations also places an enormous burden on the management and delivery of our regular programs and services.

Those are the given, everyday realities we face. Beyond that, we are planning for the future by examining changes in technology and education, our facilities and the whole gamut of services and programs required to serve students' needs in the next century. Our projections, our plans and our programs have always been based on expectations of an equitable financial base. However, as a result of the pooling of industrial

and commercial assessment, we will have to draw money from a smaller tax base. We want guarantees from the province that we will not lose funding due to pooling.

We also ask that the province consult with us when it is in the process of establishing these guarantees and any future funding arrangements. In terms of funding student programs, the province's per-pupil grant ceiling is unrealistic and woefully inadequate for large urban areas such as North York.

We know the province is being asked to increase funding in many areas. We also recognize that the provincial Treasury is not a bottomless pit. Through collaboration, there may be new ways to do things better and not necessarily at extra cost. Our schools are ageing. They require major overhauls and upgrading. We recognize the province's capital funding dilemma of keeping up with requests for new school buildings in growth areas and renovating or replacing buildings in established boards. We believe strongly that this is one area where local initiative, indeed local accountability, can help solve the problem.

North York, for example, is close to finalizing an agreement with a major developer to rebuild an existing school and have sufficient revenue left over to refurbish five more, all at no cost to the local, Metro Toronto or provincial taxpayer. We have done it by selling air rights or density rights.

North York has been proud to demonstrate leadership in the past in areas in which the province has led the way. When the province asked for affirmative action plans, North York went to work to create achievable targets. As of today, we have exceeded them. We developed one of this province's most comprehensive race relations programs and we set a standard for offering heritage language instruction. We have responded to provincial direction and to our community's needs. Given the accountability to channel our resources, we can continue to be educational forerunners and to serve as a model for other school boards.

North York would not even consider setting policy before consulting with those who could be affected by the proposed change. We consider costs but we also examine the impact on time, human resources, the use of facilities and program implications. We ask what it means to those people involved and how it will ultimately help students.

While the North York Board of Education applauds some of the new provincial initiatives, they have been introduced with little or no consultation and collaboration. We would like to be included in future discussions that impact on the services we provide. Furthermore, we encourage and welcome constructive dialogue through regular meetings with the Ministry of Education and others whose initiatives will influence the way we govern education in our jurisdiction.

The kind of programs we develop and the schedule we create to introduce them have to be different from other boards in the province. The provincial government provides direction, but it must do so in a spirit of collegiality, communication, consultation and co-operation. If provincial initiatives continue to be developed in isolation, the province runs the risk of forcing local school boards to rebel. We may not always agree on everything, but all parties are more likely to buy into a solution which has been arrived at through consultation.

The introduction of full-day kindergarten that was announced in the last throne speech will cost us an estimated \$5.3 million, not including startup funds of \$2.8 million for renovations, portables and classroom setup. There was never any discussion about whether this was feasible or even desirable. We were never consulted.

The reduction in class sizes in grades 1 and 2 will cost us \$3.6 million. This will result in increasing class sizes in the junior grades as well. Again, this was mandated without prior consultation. Other provincial initiatives, such as pay equity—an additional \$3 million to North York taxpayers—and the new employer tax on payroll to replace OHIP premiums at a cost of \$2.9 million in 1990, place severe financial pressures on the board's ability to meet program needs.

In total, we estimate that new programs and services recently mandated by government legislation will cost North York \$25 million. That translates into an increase in education taxes of 6.8 per cent, or an extra cost of about \$90 on an average home assessed at \$7,000. Even if the increase in our fixed costs stays at the rate of inflation, the items listed above will push our tax increase to our local residents into double digits.

Last year, the education portion of the property tax went up 15.3 per cent. That represented a \$176 hike. That is \$176 extra just on the education portion to the average North York home. The residents of our community will not accept another double-digit tax increase. We are not prepared to keep asking them. We will,

however, make it loud and clear to our publics that those who introduce progressive initiatives should be the ones to pay for them. We are left with an interesting dilemma. Do we do what the province requires us to do and then hit our community with a bill it is not prepared to pay, or do we abide by our taxpayers' wishes and keep property tax increases close to the rate of inflation by refusing to implement provincial legislation? Do you really want to force us to make that choice?

The Acting Chairman: Is there any other member of your delegation who would like to speak?

Mr Filion: Just to answer questions.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you for presenting so clearly the challenges you face and some of the creative ways in which you meet those challenges.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Probably nothing is rarer in captivity than an elected New Democrat in Scarborough, for instance, except for female directors of education. We have just had two in a row. That is phenomenal.

The Acting Chairman: The world is changing, Mr Johnston, and these things are happening around us.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is real evidence that your affirmative action program is working right up the ladder. I commend you for that. That is great.

I also commend you for the way you have laid this out, because we have had a lot of boards that have come in so weighed down by the analysis that you have given of your own situation that they have not been able to look past it except to say, "The ceilings are unrealistic," etc. Your opening, to suggest this major kind of review of the role of boards in the governance of education and financing of education, I think is very helpful to us as a committee. I think your point about recognition of the role of the school as it changes now at the turn of the century is really vital. We tried to touch that in our first report and I think we are going to have to make sure we talk about that in financial terms as well.

I want to ask you—because you do not get much more specific than the process essentially that you are asking us to look into—what your views are in terms of accountability of local boards if we were to move away from the property tax base as being either such a large part of the overall financing or any part of the overall financing of education, as we move into the next period of time.

We had two points of view put to us: those who believe that we have to have that local tax base to have the accountability and others who have said that you can have more of a constitutional way in terms of the role of the board to administer things. I would be interested to hear the opinions of people here.

Mr Filion: Our board does not have a firm position on that point specifically, but I think it would be fair to say that we would prefer something that would be along the lines of the funding level around 1975 which would be something like when the province provided a third. I do not think we would like to see the province providing 100 per cent funding. I guess it would logically follow from that that the province would have a much greater say in how the money is spent and that would reduce local autonomy which is something that is very precious to us. At the same time, it is not acceptable to have a situation such as we have now where we are accountable to our taxpayers for 100 per cent of what we spend. All of the money that is spent in North York for education is raised from our property taxes. At the same time, as outlined in the brief, we have a large number of programs, very expensive programs, mandated by the province. So something there is clearly out of sync on the accountability issue.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Some people would question, in terms of the argument of money not being the base, that even though you have 100 per cent of the costs now, you do not have any real autonomy now anyway, even though you are paying the full freight, or you have very limited autonomy given the controls the province has.

I would ask you in context of what one of our presenters called categorical equity—that is to say the notion that all children in Ontario should have the same kind of financial backing for their education system, the same kind of resources available to them for their education—how you square what you are suggesting, coming from a very assessment-rich area which may only require the percentage of provincial dollars you are talking about, with the needs of another child from another part of the province, both in terms of that child's equity with the child from Toronto getting the bucks and in terms of the board in that other area being dependent on 90 per cent provincial funding, going back to the 1975 example you are using, as compared with the province being at about a 30 per cent rate for North York.

Mr Filion: We are getting nothing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, no. If you moved to the 1975 model that you talked about, you would be at around 30 per cent picked up by the province and 70 per cent picked up by yourselves, as I recall, or something like that.

Mr Filion: Right. I will start and I will let the others elaborate. I think what is equitable is to allow every student in the province an equal chance to reach his or her potential. As we have tried to outline in the brief, in North York as well as in the rest of Metro Toronto, we have a different situation. We have a lot more complex problems. We have a different student clientele than in most other areas of the province. To meet the needs of those students costs a lot more money than elsewhere in the province. So I do not think we are asking for anything that is inequitable. We are just saying that we have some very dramatic needs that may not exist elsewhere in the province and it costs a lot of money to meet the needs of those students.

Miss Lacey: If I may take the two issues that you have raised of accountability and equity, those are issues that are very real for us as a board of education because we need to deal with those issues within our board, as you need to deal with them in the province as well.

The tremendous changes that Trustee Filion has alluded to are ones that our teachers are still coming to grips with. Most teachers, having a median age of 46 or 47 years old, have been in the profession so that they still remember very well a situation where the classroom they faced was one where there was a homogeneous grouping. Over the last 10 years, particularly over the last three to five years, there has been no such thing as homogeneity within any one of our classrooms.

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In some situations, it is because over the last few years we have had a turnover of 190 per cent or 200 per cent in terms of refugee and immigrant children and their families. In other circumstances, of course, because of our commitment to meeting the needs of each individual student, the whole issue of individualized programming is one we have to attend to. Whether we are talking about gifted enrichment or students with severe learning difficulties, we face the whole range of opportunities for our youngsters within the board.

Because we have dealt with the issue of equity in a very serious way across our own board, we feel that we have made a commitment to equity of program, but more important, to equity of outcome.

The issue of accountability is that we have opened up our channels of communication to the community and we deal with that kind of partnership in a profoundly different way than some other regions in Ontario; that is, in situations where parents have a public voice, we are able to listen to them, but in situations where parents do not have a voice, and they are for some reason or another excluded from the dialogue that is available to us, we have taken a very strong advocacy role on their behalf.

The issue of equity—that is, providing not only small children but adolescents and adults and seniors in the community with appropriate programming, and we are talking about literacy programs for all ages and all walks of life—is an issue we have taken upon ourselves in North York that other school boards have not attended to.

The two issues of accountability and equity, in terms of programming, are very expensive. We say to our community, “No matter what age you are, no matter what your level of education, our schools are able to provide an educational service for you and all members of the family.” We consider that accountability.

Because we have taken that kind of aggressive leadership role, in many situations, preceding ministry directives in fact, we have channelled our resources into those areas. Clearly, our board of education has intervened to support youngsters in need, to support adolescents and adults in need, as well as families in need. Our reception centres for immigrant and refugee children and families are unique in this province.

Our affirmative action policies for personnel regarding visible minorities are a first in this province. Our equity programs for young women are a first in this province. Our board has seen fit to channel its funds into those directions. We consider those issues of accountability and equity.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not disagree; those are. My difficulty from our perspective is within the context of the provincial scene. For that to be available in North York is great, but for it not to be available in Wawa or some other part of the province is unacceptable, so we have to look at provincial mechanisms as well as the local mechanisms. That is more what I was trying to get at. I am actually interested in getting some information about the outreach and advocacy approaches you take, if you would be willing to send that to the clerk. I would like to see what you are doing in that area.

The Acting Chairman: I am very pleased you have had some very good media coverage on some of those programs. I caught them from time to time. They are usually well done and obviously the content is there or the media would not be there. Thank you very much for describing them to us again this morning.

Mr Furlong: Thank you for your brief. I was struck that under your local initiative section you are close to finalizing an agreement with a major developer. I have always wondered why school boards built one-storey schools, why they did not build them higher and have either some commercial space or specialized housing within the school complex. I do not know whether you are at liberty to discuss this further, but I would be interested to know what kind of mix is being proposed in this agreement. If you are not at liberty to say so, then do not bother.

Mr Filion: We are at liberty to disclose a fair bit and Mr Gould is handling that area.

Mr Gould: The property you are talking about is in the Yonge-Sheppard area. It is a property where the North York board has approximately one half of the block. The city of North York has moved into a downtown plan that encourages whole-block development.

In pursuing that development, the developer who purchased the other half of the block wished to pursue commercial towers on Yonge Street, requiring extra density to do that. As it stands now, the North York board really will keep the same property—indeed, it will gain a little more property than it had previous to this particular proposal—and the developer will put up two commercial towers.

There are some issues in terms of day care that we have to look at, whether day care could be located within the school property or within the commercial towers, but generally speaking it was the selling of the density rights that will enable the North York board to tear down the 1927 school and be able to put up a brand-new school. In this particular case, it is a school for the arts, a school that is serving all of North York and, in some cases, some of the other boards. It is a unique arrangement that has happened as a result of the downtown plan.

That, however, is not the only initiative the board is looking at. There are some things we urge the committee to look at and that has to do with some of the capital grant plan regulations that are now being looked at. In any way the boards can be encouraged to take advantage of some of those opportunities, as long as they are in congruence with the community using the

school, we would encourage that to happen. The example, I guess, that we used is only one of several. The North York board has closed 39 schools; actually, now we have 37 schools that are in that category.

One of the problems with the current regulations has to do with the school board being required to do only five-year planning in terms of its facilities. What happens is that the board cannot get into a long-term view of its properties to look at other ways that revenue can be used for educational purposes, but at the same time also meeting provincial objectives. The province has several of its own objectives for school board lands that certainly should be looked at. We would encourage you to take a look at that five-year section in your capital grant plan and encourage you to think of long-term planning that would mean the separate school board, as well as the public boards, would have to get into a long-term planning mode.

Mr Furlong: Can you give me an average dollar amount that your residential property taxpayer pays towards the education cost?

Mr Law: It is around \$1,360.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Keyes, you had a question as well.

Mr Keyes: It was only a pupil-teacher ratio one. I was surprised when you talked about the additional cost, because with the leadership you have provided pre-empting provincial initiatives I would have thought you probably are already down to PTRs of at least around 20 class size at the primary level. I wonder if you could give me a rundown of PTRs across your board.

Miss Lacey: We are very pleased with the PTRs we have been able to reach. In fact, last year our average PTR across the city in the primary division was around 20 to 1. Our board, again in a very progressive stance, accorded the teacher 120 minutes preparation time before any other local board in order to ensure that at the same time we were able to provide time for the teachers to accommodate the new programs, so we are well on the way.

Nevertheless, if I may, it now puts tremendous pressure on the junior division, so we will not be surprised when we hear another mandate that

concerns the average class size for the junior division.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Or maybe even the rest of primary some day.

Miss Lacey: Or the rest of primary.

Mr Keyes: Do you mind telling us what they are in junior and intermediate?

Miss Lacey: We have an average pupil-teacher ratio of 26.7.

Mr Keyes: Is that the entire system?

Miss Lacey: That is the entire system.

Mr Keyes: PTRs are very meaningless. I have asked many boards what they are versus what class sizes are. Each board calculates based on its philosophy of education as to what should have priority, but if you look at the guidelines within the ministry regulations, what would be your average class size in your junior and intermediate divisions at the moment?

Miss Lacey: I would say that would be the range, that it would range between 24, which is now our target PTR, to 27 or 28, given that there are some unique circumstances where a particular school may have chosen to organize in a different way, which we do allow in specific instances where there has been extensive consultation with the teachers and the community in order to accommodate certain specialized areas. That is the range.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you all very much for coming this morning and providing some real insight into your system. I know it is and has a reputation of being one of the most progressive. You are the last presenters. I do not know whether that is significant to you, but I am sure it is significant to us.

Mrs Chandler: We are the last presenters today?

The Acting Chairman: You are the last presenters, period, of all the hearings we have had over the last four weeks.

I think we have had a request from the committee to have an in camera session at this point for five minutes or so. Is that correct?

The committee continued in camera at 1155.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1422 in committee room 1.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Acting Chairman (Mrs O'Neill): I think we all know Ron Trbovich, Wayne Burtnyk, Brian Lenglet and Leon Brumer. Please proceed. You obviously have some order to the presentation. Mr Trbovich has this very calculated mind that goes from point A to point B; I know that.

Mr Trbovich: I understand the committee is interested in some discussion around the matter of fairer sharing of the local tax base. I am prepared to answer any questions on that front. As well, there were a number of questions raised throughout the proceedings. I think our staff submitted some material. You might have some questions on that.

There were also some questions for which we provided written answers and Leon has copies of that. Rather than going into the specifics and using up the time of the committee, if you get a chance to review them and you have any questions around those answers, we would be more than happy to answer them while we are here, if it is your preference that I not go through the answers. I think there are some eight or nine of these.

The Acting Chairman: Are you suggesting you are going to pass those to us now and give us 10 minutes to scan them? Is that what you would like to do?

Mr Trbovich: Sure, if that is reasonable.

The Acting Chairman: How do you feel about that, Mr Johnston and Mr Villeneuve? I know you are asked to do three things at once right now, Richard.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that would be fine. How do I handle these things? There are a number of things we can be covering as these are being handed out. I am sure questions will come on this as we move on, away from the pooling initiatives, for instance, that you have taken, to these other matters. I have a list of things anyhow out of the previous matters, which I want to go through, so that is fine.

The Acting Chairman: What have we decided is fine? That we are not going to speak to each other for 10 minutes?

Mr R. F. Johnston: No. I think we can actually start the discussion on the pooling

initiatives right now, if you want, while this is being handed out and people can peruse it.

The Acting Chairman: Okay. What we are asking then, Mr Trbovich, is that you talk to us about the directions, discussions or whatever that you had a couple of weeks ago with the partners in education.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. We had an instruction of the minister. We met with the key representatives of the education community to apprise them of three important initiatives the minister was planning to introduce in the House for the fall session involving legislation.

The first issue dealt with the fairer sharing of the local tax base or pooling. His indication was that it was important that the legislation be introduced early in the session and that there be adequate opportunity for comment on the bill, in order that it proceed through the House with the hope that it can be effected to implement the pooling arrangement 1 January 1990. There are some tight time lines around that. That was for the information of that group, a progress report, if you will.

The second item dealt with the matter of legislation to clarify the boundaries of separate and public school boards that are coterminous. If I may elaborate on that, essentially the thrust here is to make minor adjustments, primarily in southern Ontario, where the boundaries of a separate school board, in particular, are not identical to those of its coterminous partner. That is a function of the previous legislative practice which provided that five Roman Catholic families could organize themselves and adopt a resolution to create a separate school zone. This area could then become part of the jurisdiction of the separate school board. It would be obligated to provide service to the children of those families and those individuals would be able then to direct their school support to the separate school system.

That practice resulted in separate school boards expanding their boundaries over time. We have cases in southern Ontario where with the boundaries, because they are based on circles, there are spaces that often include part of another municipality or overlap into another county, board, jurisdiction and so on. It is the intent of the bill to make the minor adjustments to square off and make the boundaries coterminous. There will be some exceptions to that.

For example, in the case of the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board, there is a high school in Essex county operated by the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board that serves all children from the Windsor separate board. That would be an exception where we would say that that facility in Essex county would continue to be part of the Windsor separate board and the children would continue to have access. There are other minor exceptions.

The real change will occur over time and into the future, and that is primarily in the north where there are larger differences, if you will. These will have to be dealt with on an exceptional basis, one at a time, over time, and will have to involve both boards, where boards are affected, in the discussions around that. For example, a board may extend into—I think it is the North Shore board—part of Little Current on Manitoulin Island and it is not the intention of the legislation to disturb that situation at all or to create a new separate school board in that situation.

Essentially, the legislation is designed to square off the boundaries and make them coterminous wherever feasible.

The Acting Chairman: May I just ask one question. This came up yesterday. Is that done strictly for administrative purposes and/or governance?

Mr Trbovich: It is essentially to facilitate the exercise of sharing because the sharing is on a municipal basis. Because that is the case, if you have boundaries that cross municipal, township and county boundaries, it just creates a bureaucratic mess if you try to address that.

The other point of it is to ensure that when five families create a separate school zone in the future, the formation is consistent with existing township and municipal boundaries and not circles breaking boundaries. So in the future, if families form school zones, they will be consistent with the existing municipal and township boundaries, and in the case of northern Ontario the geographic township boundaries in the unorganized territories.

The main thrust here is administrative. There are some cases where it is for maintaining the right of five Catholic families to form zones, if they so choose.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: Do I understand that you are talking about two different pieces of legislation?

Mr Trbovich: This will all form part of one bill.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It will be an omnibus bill?

Mr Trbovich: To describe it, I guess it would be a bill including the pooling legislation, the boundary legislation and the legislation respecting the single panel, which is the third component.

On the matter of the single panel, I made a brief comment about that when I appeared before the committee on the first day. The intent here is, I guess, twofold. It is simplification on the one hand, moving from two panels where we make grants payable in respect of the elementary panel and the secondary panel. This is historically necessary.

If you go back, it revolves around the matter that secondary boards were formed and these panels were funded separately from the elementary ones where there was a separate school elementary and a public school elementary panel. Now with the extension and Bill 30, where extension has occurred—it has occurred in most places in Ontario—that distinction is no longer necessary. The notion of moving to one panel means that the question of funding will be greatly simplified and the question of reporting revenues, grants and their expenditures on a two-panel basis will be reduced to one. It is a simplification measure.

The result of that most evident to the ordinary ratepayer and taxpayer would be that instead of having two mill rates on his tax bill, one for elementary and one for secondary purposes, there will just be one mill rate for education.

The other aspect of it is that it provides boards with flexibility in allocating those funds where they determine it is most necessary. In other words, those grant moneys and their tax revenues can be—it gives them increased flexibility, if you will. That measure is the third part of the bill.

That discussion took place two weeks ago. There are a number of other changes we are proposing to embark upon. That involves on our part a process of consultation. We intend to formally begin that process some time in November, probably mid-November. For the benefit of the committee, we can certainly alert you to the areas we will be sharing with the education community. They mostly centre on our current funding formula and our intention to improve various components within it.

For example, one of the largest issues we will be looking at is in respect of how we fund and support transportation of children from home to

school through the general legislative grant. This is a \$375-million to \$400-million grant item. We have been looking at this very carefully over the last few years. Indeed, the Macdonald commission recommended that it be reviewed.

The current funding formula does not necessarily promote efficiency or effectiveness in transportation funding policy across Ontario. Essentially, we pay grants to school boards on approved bus routes, on average, to at least 75 per cent for the first level of expenditure and even higher in some cases, to 80 per cent and 85 per cent. If the local school board is only putting 15 cents on the dollar in terms of its transportation decisions, one could argue that it is probably in its interest to get into transportation. In some cases, transportation costs have far outstripped inflation and enrolment increases, together with any reasonable additional costs that may be attributable.

The Acting Chairman: If I can just tell Mr Johnston what you are doing, Mr Trbovich is now telling us the things they are going to consult with in the month of November, and transportation is the first item he has begun with.

Mr Trbovich: The point about transportation being that generally it does not promote efficiency; it promotes an expansion of the transportation system of students because the local pain, the impact on the local taxpayer, is minimal. We have to develop some options on funding transportation that promote efficiency and also provide some incentive to boards to get more efficient and to co-operate with their coterminous partners in putting in a transportation system that would ensure some of the basic components; that is, safety of children, transporting those children long distances to school from home and those sorts of basic requirements that a transportation system should meet.

That challenge is a difficult one. We understand very well that school trustees are often besieged by parents to increase their transportation policies locally, so it is likely to be one that most everyone in the education community is going to be very interested in. We are in the process of finalizing some options around this issue that we will be presenting to our colleagues in education for comment.

The Acting Chairman: This has become such a strong item that we have heard about from so many people. Could you tell us a little bit about the process of consultation. Do you deal with all the partners at one time or do you deal with them separately? Do you give them a paper usually? It

is that kind of thing. Could you tell us a little bit about your methods.

Mr Trbovich: To be frank, if I can give it a little bit of context, for the last two and a half years we have been working very hard in the ministry and in the government, with our colleagues elsewhere in government, reviewing the whole matter of education finance. We have been looking at a number of options and ways to improve all of this whole funding exercise. We have instructions from government now to proceed on this new model, which we have shared with the committee, that we implemented in 1989.

There are a number of changes that have to be investigated, shared with the community and implemented. We are only now in a formal way going to begin a fulsome consultation. What we mean by consultation is not simply meeting with perhaps the key representatives of the stakeholder interest groups, but rather working with each of these organizations, perhaps even at the staff level, because these changes involve fairly technical matters.

As I envisage the consultation process, it will hopefully occur at the staff level at some point and elevate itself as consensus builds and positions build until we can come to a conclusion on the position we want to pursue. I do not want to mislead anyone. I think we are not necessarily looking for consensus because it would be indeed difficult to achieve consensus on some of these more contentious issues. What we are looking for is a reasonable and effective means of achieving some of the objectives that we will be outlining against each of these specific funding mechanisms.

Our agenda of change: We can foresee introducing changes each year to the general legislative grant funding formula, and they should be incremental changes. They should not involve substantial shifts in support to school boards. School boards should be allowed to react and plan effectively to absorb the change, whether the change is going in one direction or the other. So we can see a number of incremental adjustments each year.

In the case of transportation, I foresee that kind of process. If we adopt a certain position and tack, then I can see it being phased in so that there is not that radical change or shift in grant.

Another key area that we will be examining—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Before we go off transportation, you forwarded to us earlier on, through Leon Brumer, the data on the 1989 estimates. I do not know if you covered this when

I was called out to the phone or not, but I was not clear on these three different figures and I wondered if somebody can explain them to us: the 1989 school board expenditure, \$536.9 million; approved expenditure, \$475.7 million; grant, \$370.3 million. I wonder if you can run us through what those three things are.

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Mr Trbovich: On our projections, the first figure, 1989 school board expenditure, we are projecting that it is roughly \$540 million in transportation. There is a current funding mechanism involved in the approval process, so the approval process in this case says that of all of this transportation represented by \$540 million, \$475 million of it, in our view, is within the approved limits. The additional costs might be costs totally absorbed by the board to transport students for other purposes which the approval process does not cover. It could be things like transporting children to some event—a day program or an evening program, or it might be bus services on the weekend for the basketball team; I do not know. But they are costs that do not fall within the approval process. Those costs are borne 100 per cent by the local boards.

Of the approved costs, up to \$475 million, \$370 million of that is the provincial grant paid to boards. So we are paying \$370 million towards the \$475-million expenditure. Some boards get very little grant, depending on their relative wealth. But essentially that is the picture. I do not have the numbers in front of me, but that cost has increased quite dramatically over the last few years, even with declining enrolment at a point in time.

So that is essentially it; it is very akin to capital expenditures. When you build a school and our approved cost is for \$3 million and you happen to spend \$3.5 million, the \$500,000 will be picked up solely by the local ratepayers within the board. Maybe they wanted some special extra facility that was not covered under the standard school that we fund. The grant, in respect of that cost, would be at their rate of support.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I presume this may still include some anomalies or anachronisms like the 35-to-1 weighting factor for classrooms. Are there parallels to that? We had some concerns raised this morning by one of the school boards around van transportation, in terms of the seating capacity formula you developed in terms of funding, but I do not want to get into that kind of detail.

What I want to know is how we compare or contrast with other provinces in this matter of

transportation of students. I know, for instance, that on one matter of policy, we are highly privatized here, whereas in most other provinces, most of the busing is within the public sector. But I am wondering, as you are preparing now for this consultation, whether you have done any analysis of how other jurisdictions in Canada are looking at busing costs. Are they escalating in a similar fashion? Are the provinces being caught in the same kind of need to revise their approach? Can you give us a little bit of an overview of that?

Mr Trbovich: I do not have the information before me, but there is a recent publication from the Canadian Education Association, which had a conference in Toronto last week, discussing transportation and funding across Canada. I can make that available to the committee. But in Ontario it is largely privatized and in some cases we are going to have to help boards introduce some competition in the tendering process.

There are some boards in Ontario in which when they tender for services, there is no competition, and we have to recognize that and help them. They should become bidders for the service themselves, I suppose, so we can keep the tendering process competitive. I think that is very, very important. This is a large, very high-cost factor. That money, if it is being spent inefficiently, could otherwise go back into the classroom. It is our motivation and I guess it is everyone's. There are a number of issues around transportation that have to be addressed and that is just one of them.

To be frank with the committee, we do not have a model of transportation efficiency that we can point to in Ontario. Frankly, we have to study it more carefully. If one has a solid notion of what is an effective transportation, then that can become the standard, the objective test by which all others can be measured, and that is difficult, because obviously the boards are so diverse. The way they organize their family of schools and their programming, it is so difficult to develop that model, but it is not impossible.

What we want to do is focus on some of the more basic requirements in transportation, such as safety factors. We want to look at home-to-school. We do not want to set limits nor maximums, because again, they just do not fit the Ontario experience, which varies. You cannot, for example, set a limit and then apply it in Etobicoke if Highway 427 runs down the middle or separates the child from the school. Safety factors override that.

It is very difficult setting standards, but within this process of transportation we are attempting

to place boards, first of all, on an equal footing. What we mean by that is, geography and distance from schools and sparsity, or the density of the student population relative to the schools, are factors beyond the board's control. They are just givens, and we should be funding those boards at 100 per cent grant to put them on an equal footing with all the other boards across Ontario.

Then we should introduce a separate funding model that involves a local participation on their part in sharing in the cost of transportation beyond that basic-level grant. That will tend to be our approach. This is not a science and we are going to be looking forward to a lot of good feedback on the various options.

The Acting Chairman: Do you have those criteria on one page, Mr Trbovich, or would you rather we use Hansard if we want to—

Mr Trbovich: We can actually share some material on the background and some of our thinking on this with the committee in writing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be very interested in that. I have been corresponding now for a couple of years with a gentleman from Saskatchewan around school bus safety—he is an ex-Ontarian—and his concern about our safety standards, or what he considers a lack of safety standards compared with what they have been looking at in the west.

The other thing you touched on was the thing I was going to raise, and that is the corporate concentration in the field of bus service and the lack of choice in tendering. I am wondering if you have information on that to share with us. You say there are some boards where you might have to help them become competitors themselves in order to try to get costs down a little bit, but have you done an analysis of the corporate concentration? When you go around the province, the same names seem to be cropping up on the sides of school buses all over the place in terms of the private companies which control them.

Mr Trbovich: I do not have any concrete information with me, but when you look at tendering processes in various boards, if there are five or six organizations tendering for a route, that is healthy, I would think, and that is really what we are looking at.

You might find some names repeating themselves across Ontario, and they tend to be very competitive in the bidding process, but in some jurisdictions there might only be one organization in the tendering process, or even two, and one gets the contract for a year and he or she leases the buses to the other firm and then there

they go at it again; the buses are going back and forth. That is not the case everywhere, but there are instances of that.

I think that has to be looked at very carefully. I think we have a responsibility to assure ourselves that it is competitive. Otherwise, on the part of the ministry, we are not taking care of those dollars carefully. The transportation funding policy has that kind of question involved in it, but also many others. Most boards, frankly, are very, very careful on the transportation front. It can get to be a high-cost item if indeed the system becomes quite large, there is no question of that, but there is also pressure on the part of school boards for the province to set standards or limits on travel. We do not think that appropriate at all and that would not be our thrust in this particular exercise.

1450

The Acting Chairman: Is everybody complete on that for the moment? You had another point.

Mr Trbovich: I cannot possibly describe them all, but another serious change that we are going to be examining is the question of ceilings. Each year the ceilings are adjusted for inflation and the effect of teacher contracts across Ontario. Each year they have met that or exceeded inflation and those contract settlements.

A fundamental review of the ceilings has not taken place for some time. We are going to enter into that process and we are going to share in that process what should be the criteria to establish a basic core ceiling for education purposes. To establish that standard and then hopefully to come to some kind of consensus around it will be the challenge.

The Acting Chairman: That has been there for a long time.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. My sense is that it is not going to be very much different from the key components in the current ceiling. The question of how high the ceilings are or the quantum associated with that is another matter, but I think the key ingredients are already built into the ceiling now. That ceiling should, and does in fact in our view, reflect what we consider to be a core education program.

You often hear comments about how we introduce new programs or new policy guidelines and we do not provide appropriate funding. The point is that the ceilings should reflect the funding for a broad core education program. It is those additional expenditures over those ceilings that are at the discretion of the boards. If we want

to get into programming, we can talk about the increased number of teachers, reduce the pupil-teacher ratio and so on. These are local decisions and they all add costs and those costs are over the ceiling. We feel strongly that the ceilings do reflect the core cost but at the same time should be re-examined, because they have not been for a number of years.

The other key thing that we should be cognizant of is the agenda for change in respect of schooling. We are talking about restructuring the education program, and the funding system should be supportive of that new scheme. I think the ceilings are predicated on elementary-secondary, if you will, and now we are looking at a new structure in education. I think we are going to have to address that in the context of ceilings—one ceiling or a variety of ceilings.

Many have expressed the notion that we move to one ceiling. That is part of the discussion and one of the options that will be examined, of just moving to one component of funding in respect to core education, and that has as its merits that it is simple, straightforward and very clear. That would be consistent with our general thrust, which is trying to make this a lot more understandable, but there are many in the education community that would want us to further subdivide core funding into various components. We have to look at that as well.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Trbovich, I knew there would be questions on this because this has come up over and over again. I will ask Mr Furlong to pose the first question.

Mr Furlong: I would just like some clarification on it. You said that there was an adjustment for inflation and for teachers' salaries. I am having difficulty understanding. I guess my problem over the past four or five weeks is that I am not sure how many other people understand what is going on. You say that and then you say there are adjustments for pupil-teacher ratio that are costs incurred by the school boards themselves over and above the ceilings. Do I take it that your core does not include these adjustments for PTR? Is that what you are saying to me? Are you saying that there is a core based on some kind of factor? I do not know what it is. Is it the same as a loading factor that you are using for capital? How do you determine what amounts you give additionally to the ceiling for increasing teachers' salaries?

Mr Trbovich: It certainly would reflect the fact that as a matter of stated policy the relationship, the teacher-student ratio should be 20 to 1 in grades 1 and 2. We certainly respect

that in the case of senior kindergarten and junior kindergarten.

We are then looking at averages on pupil-teacher ratios and the number of teachers per pupil. The contract settlements are the factor that we have to plug into, because those really set the cost of education. If you accept that 71 per cent or 72 per cent of the cost of education is in respect of teachers' salaries, then you should be adjusting those ceilings to those provincial average contract settlements each year. So, that happens.

But when we talk about expenditures over the ceiling, we are talking about additional, enhanced, enriched, improved or expanded programming. In the case of special education, if the requirement is for four special education consultants at \$75,000, \$80,000 each or more, and a board chooses to have seven of them, those are costs, local choice decisions that are going to be picked up, first of all, totally by the ratepayers in that community and they are going to be reflected as overceiling expenditures. So we have a notional view that the ceiling should represent a core, basic program.

Mr Furlong: I guess the problem is that the basic program then, I take it, would say that you do not need seven consultants; you only need one or you need none. What does it say? If the decision is made, somewhere down the road the ministry is saying: "You are going to provide this program. You therefore need somebody to manage the program. You may need a consultant in the program." Who says what that basic minimum is?

Mr Trbovich: For example, a small board may be faced with the need to hire a music consultant full time. One of its options is to take two elementary school principals and get them to develop a music program and to introduce it to their teachers in selected classrooms to implement it. That is an option, as opposed to hiring a full-time music consultant.

You may wish to have a full-time—

Mr Furlong: The fact is that someone has to develop the program. There seems to me to be not a basic—I do not know what the hell it is—minimum standard or something so that you can say, "This is what we are funding, and anything you do over that, you have to pay for."

I do not see that model as being in place. I just do not see it.

Mr Trbovich: I recognize the point you make. People just do not understand what the ceiling represents. It is just a number. What does it represent? I think that is our problem, to explain it.

What it is supposed to represent is what we consider, "This amount, for all the children in your system, will put in place teachers in classrooms, principals and vice-principals, as the case may be, and supervisory officers and specialists to adequately deliver a program." That has never been articulated or expressed adequately, certainly since I have been going to school. That is the challenge when we get into reviewing what the ceiling is supposed to be.

Frankly, it has various components in it now. Wayne can explain it, I am sure, if you want to get into the detail, but that is our challenge. I accept your point and I cannot say to you that you need one teacher for 35 kids or 24 children in grade 3 as opposed to 27 in grade 4. It does not work that way. It works on larger averages, if you will.

The Acting Chairman: Do you want Mr Burtnyk to attempt? I know this has been something you have been struggling with for four weeks.

Mr Furlong: I am still going to struggle with it, probably, long after this report has been done. I will just ask another question, because we have heard all along that these programs that have been mandated by the ministry are sent out to boards, and boards say, "Fine, you give us an initial phase, an amount of dollars, and then you abandon us and we are left with funding the program totally from the local taxpayer."

You did provide us some information about the grants and the 60 per cent back in 1975 and provided a 1988-89—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Apples and apples. I was very impressed.

Mr Furlong: That is what I would like to compare, apples and apples.

If I take 1975 and I read the program—and I am just wondering if you can do this. Is it possible? I think it would help me a lot. Is it possible to take a position from 1975 to 1988 and to say, "This is what we funded in 1975," and to say, "From 1975 to 1988, we mandated that you shall perform the following new initiatives. We provided X amount of dollars for these things"? How much have those new initiatives cost up to 1988 over and above that 1975 base? Then when we compare the \$2 billion to the \$9 billion, we compare apples to apples. I am curious. Is it a fact that there have been initiatives by the provincial government that have been borne totally by the local taxpayer? It strikes me, when we start talking about 60 per cent or 45 per cent, what is it 60 per cent of?

1500

Mr Trbovich: We did not editorialize on this answer. We just presented the facts as you see, but I think it is worth the comment. In 1975—Mr Johnston knows this—

Mr Furlong: He was here then he tells me.

Mr Jackson: I was a trustee when the numbers started to drop.

Mr Trbovich: There were expenditure controls. Those numbers dropped, the school board expenditures skyrocketed. They did not go through the roof but they increased substantially. There were expenditure controls on in 1975. In 1976, they were removed. There was so much pressure that these ceilings back in 1975 were so inadequate, we have all these other pressures. We had pressures for intercity schools. We have this, we have that.

The government of the day removed the expenditure controls and what we saw was expenditures increasing dramatically, especially in those boards that had the tax base available to them. So you cannot compare. You see these expenditure increases are not a result of any mandated programs per se, but when we look back at the 1987 throne speech initiatives and the 1989 throne speech initiatives, we have provided funding for those initiatives right up front. If it is classroom reduction, the payment is there.

One can make the point that once you have achieved the 20-1, and we have achieved that goal of introducing it over time and we have given incentives to school boards to get there, one would say: "Well, you are taking away that money. We do not get that incentive any longer." That money gets rolled into or moves into the basic grant, the category 1 grant. So the government committed that money on the one hand for incentives to encourage boards to get there and, as it gets phased in, it goes into the basic grant. It is a fact that that money is going in there.

In terms of textbooks and all of those things, if you spend \$1 we provide \$1 to buy those books. If it is in computer hardware, we put the money up front and give allocations across Ontario and it is up to boards to access those allocations.

When we talk about throne speech initiatives like junior kindergarten, we put the money right up front, that as these additional children come into the system this is the provincial contribution and the operating grants to the ceiling in respect of those children. That is separately identifiable money. As you see in our general legislative

grant of 1989, we specified those provincial initiatives, those initiative grants very clearly.

There is also some truth to the case that when you move into lower pupil-teacher ratio or you move into other programs like mandated special education, we provide funding and grant money, but that area continues to grow and there is a process in place to identify children who are exceptional. That IPRC process is one that involves educators and people who are expert in this area. The child is assessed and evaluated and that child is identified for special needs in education. Those costs have increased.

I think it is fair to say that some boards have organized themselves in a very special way to deal with those problems and create those opportunities for children. It is true that that costs a lot of money, but those programs are mandated. Where some boards may have not addressed those needs, we are providing some funding—\$215 per child for every child in the system—but some boards are spending considerably more. I think that is a real cost that has grown.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is also incredibly hard to measure if you look at your own statistics which you have provided us. I was really blown away by the fact that there is no way I can contrast or compare in any rational fashion the evidence of how special education is being implemented from one area to another in terms of cost-effectiveness, on the one hand, or in terms of the methodologies for identifying certain exceptionalities.

There is a large range between kids who are considered to be gifted and from one community to another. The difference in the figures just sort of jumps off the page sometimes. I have real difficulty that we have not had in this whole process a much better evaluation or comprehensive audit of this whole process than we have had before we are now rolling it into the general legislative grants for ever and a day at this point.

Mr Trbovich: By making it part of the basic grant, we are still showing it separately. But to get into the accounting of those dollars, the \$215 grant per child that we provide, I am confident that every board in Ontario can account very carefully for the expenditure of those funds up to that amount in the area of special ed.

Mr Jackson: I tried the Halton board and they could not give me anything.

Mr Trbovich: If we required it, I think they could account for it.

Mr Jackson: They will account to you, but they cannot account to their own trustees.

Mr Trbovich: I have no comment on that.

The Acting Chairman: We are off topic.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will come back to this one.

The Acting Chairman: Okay. Mr Keyes wanted to have a question. I do not know whether you have had your question yet.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No. I have not.

The Acting Chairman: Okay.

Mr Keyes: It follows along the same idea, that is, probably the admission that we need to look at it because if we look at what we consider to be the ceiling for approved costs and then we look at the fact that 90 per cent approximately of the boards are spending beyond that, we must to some extent be able to determine that what we allotted as dollars per student for approved programs is not adequate in today's economical time. There has to be an agreement to the ministry as to what the components are.

We had one board, of all the submissions, that said it does have all the components and the costing of them. I am wondering whether the components that they have and have used compare at all with ours. There was one yesterday that told us, and it is the only board in all our 139 submissions. But the point is that if 80 per cent to 90 per cent spend beyond the ceilings, it is obvious that our determination of the cost to provide the basic program is out of line with what the experience of the majority of the boards is. Therefore, that is where we surely have to come to some agreement on what the basic ingredients are of the core programs and what the costs of them are on a general basis across the province, and use more of that in coming up with a ceiling.

Mr Trbovich: If I may comment, I am not convinced that it is just a simple matter of increasing the ceilings by a certain amount of money. I think we have to examine what we understand to be a core program and what it costs, what the components should be. I am looking forward to that exercise because I think we might surprise ourselves about what we consider to be valid costs and what we consider to be discretionary ones.

Until we can get into that exercise and very carefully define the determinants in the factors, then we can come to the conclusion about how much it should be increased. But to say that we should increase it by \$1,000 across the board or whatever that number might be and then tie ourselves to that would be a mistake. If we are really interested in accountability in accounting for our provincial contribution to education, we

want to make sure that it is going specifically to identifiable core program requirements and not just being driven by some formula that happens to be a function of school board expenditures which are locally determined and not without any provincial input. I think that is our challenge when we look at the ceilings.

1510

I visited with a board that is doing a remarkable job, the North of Superior District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. It is not an extended board. It has an elementary panel of about 1,100 children and is spending just below the ceiling. I have been meeting with this board and it has certain needs that are not adequately addressed by the ceilings and the grants. For example, it may need a special education consultant who is bilingual to serve that elementary panel. It does not have that particular resource, which is probably essential, and it may have one or two other requirements; but the difference happens to be in the director, the principals and the teaching staff who make the difference because of the extra commitment on their part.

That is the only board or the other odd one that can possibly deliver at that level so, yes, your point about its being increased is true. But how much and why? I think it should be for those reasons and then we can come to a consensus on what a core ceiling should be.

Mr Keyes: I could not agree with you more on that, because I would not want to try just to say that we take the average of all the boards that overspent, and even if we got agreement on what they spent and then used that to increase their ceilings, that would not meet any other good criteria of what is a basic program. I guess the point is the type of consultative process that you are going to use, even though you have talked about it before, for this very purpose, so that when we arrive at one, there will be some consensus that it was done on a consultative basis and might have some greater degree of acceptance.

Mr Trbovich: I do not think it can be accomplished within the time frame of about six months to a year. I think it is going to take a little longer than that. We now have two ceilings, and if you look at those ceilings, they are tending to come together while they are increasing. If you took the technical education component out of the secondary one, then you would see that they are almost identical.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It depends what you take out of the elementary panel of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation presentation.

Mr Keyes: He bit his tongue before he answered that one.

The Acting Chairman: If you are ready, Mr Johnston wants his question before you sum up. You may sum up differently after his question.

Mr Jackson: It would be worth the price of admission.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess there are a number of difficulties, but one of the neat things is that if we go back to the 1975 thing and the teachers' strike at the time, the large rise in salaries that was interpreted across the province and then the taking away of the control and that sort of thing, then one can look at that and say that was the beginning of the difficulties in terms of the disparity in the ceilings if one wants. But as I understand it, there are certain things that are not in the ceilings, such as the major component, teacher salaries, for instance.

You made it sound as if their rises of salary are incorporated but, as I understand it from the briefing I received just the other day about this, the grid is not incorporated. In other words, the rises that come naturally within the grid do not find themselves within the ceiling notions and the increases year by year and therefore, with our ageing teacher population, more and more experience is there and more and more people are reaching the top of the grid. That percentage of a couple of percentage points perhaps in each section of the grid is not being reflected in the ceilings in terms of salaries on an annual basis. If that is the case, surely that is one just very fundamental component of reality, of what boards are having to face that is not there.

Mr Trbovich: I am going to defer to Mr Burtnyk to answer that question. Go ahead, Wayne.

Mr Burtnyk: The way we increase the grant ceiling each year is that we take the grant ceiling in total, split it up into all of its parts, into instruction, heating and those kinds of costs, and then try to apply inflators, if you like, to each of those cost items, and the key item obviously is instruction.

The way we do that is to take the agreements of all school boards in the province, cost them out and take into account the increase the school board incurs on the grid, the increase in its actual grid, plus the increments that teachers have each year as a result of their moving up in the grid and, as well, the upgrading that the teachers incur as they go across the grid.

So those three components are included in the inflator to be applied to the instructional portion

of a grant ceiling. Of course, heating is also inflated, according to the increase in energy. Then you total up those items.

Mr Trbovich: So in effect, yes, we are reflecting the effect of the grid and the experience and the ageing of the teachers through the grid. I think that accounts for some difference between the secondary and elementary ceilings.

Mr Burtnyk: That is why they are getting closer together: The increments at the elementary level are a higher cost and the upgrading at the elementary level is a higher cost to the school board than they are at the secondary level.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is not exactly contrary information to what I have received in the past from ministry officials and people from the federations. Are you saying that the entire raises that are involved in the grids are reflected under the real costs to the board? Because that is not the information that I was given. Does that mean that the increase was only four per cent last year for the good changes plus the increments that were agreed upon? Surely that is not the case.

Mr Burtnyk: No. The increase in the grant to school boards, if you exclude the throne speech initiatives, was that four per cent. However, if you look at the increase in the grant ceilings, the approved expenditure of school boards, it was above that. In fact, it was 4.4 at the secondary level and 5.2 or whatever.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So if the board is already way over ceiling, then what you just told me does not really affect it anyhow. Right?

Mr Burtnyk: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you are under ceiling, then presumably the ceiling would have risen enough for them to be able to accommodate their grid within it. But if they are already over ceiling, what you are telling me is that in point of fact, of course, the grid component is causing an exponential problem for them.

Mr Furlong: Supplementary to that: You do not include all teachers then when you do this? Those teachers who are there as a result of local activity for increased PTR are not even included in this?

Mr Burtnyk: That is right.

Mr Trbovich: Nor are all the support staff and any other additional costs that might arise out of those contracts or negotiations.

Mr Burtnyk: That is the reason for the shortfall in the grant ceilings over the years versus school board expenditure. All of the

PTR-type items and the prep time and those sorts of items are not incorporated into the grant ceilings.

The Acting Chairman: May I just pursue that a little further, Mr Burtnyk? You suggest that you take all of the salary settlements. Do you take an average of those then, because the approved cost is not- for each board, it is for the whole province?

Mr Burtnyk: Right.

The Acting Chairman: So you take an average of the settlement.

Mr Burtnyk: Right.

Mr Jackson: That had been settled at that point in time.

Mr Burtnyk: Yes. They are not all-

Mr Jackson: It is a dipstick and it is based on the early-when is that done?

Mr Burtnyk: We do this in January and by January about two thirds of the agreements are in.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Johnston, are your questions complete on this at this particular moment?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, but they are not sure they are going to want to-

The Acting Chairman: I have no other hand at the moment and Mr Trbovich is going to sum up to this point. At least that is what I thought he was going to do.

Mr Trbovich: We are going to be looking at other components within the funding model for improvements. We want to look at compensatory education funding: the distribution of those grants and how that money is spent. We want to look at the funding model for continuing education. There are a number of other items. Our plan is to introduce some of those improvements over time. Last year, for-

The Acting Chairman: Starting in November?

1520

Mr Trbovich: Yes. The effect of them would be that they would take form in the general legislative grant regulation, which is effective 1 January of the year and into the future. One of the other more interesting issues we will be looking at, one that is probably of interest to the committee, is the question of fiscal year. Right now school boards operate on a calendar year. I am sorry, the grant mechanism and the funding mechanism and the property tax system operate on a calendar year, January to December, and yet

the school boards' fiscal year, for all intents and purposes, is August to July. The children are in school from September through to June.

If you were to adjust that fiscal year for school boards, it would put it more in line with their planning and budgeting on a school year, their school year. Second, it would allow us to announce the grants and the entitlement for grants three, four and five months in advance of their setting their formal budgets, so they would have better opportunity to respond to the provincial initiatives and the grants in the setting of their local requirements. That is one problem or issue that we are looking at for the future.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Johnston would like to ask a question on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just to step back actually, it is on the compensatory education review that you are doing. Thank you for the documentation on that, by the way. It was fascinating to read, although I must say the formula struck me as coming out of some sort of 1950s notions of social equity.

Mr Trbovich: They are.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought they might have been.

Mr Trbovich: How did you know?

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are two sets that you gave us there, the brief one-pager, which is nice, and then in fact the more detailed way of coming up with the figures. Another thing I was interested to know is just the reality of where the bucks go and if you have that broken down anywhere by board or that kind of thing in terms of how much of the \$77.4 million goes to inner-city schools in Metro versus native off-reserve types. It would be very interesting to see, given this wonderful four-point approach to defining somebody in need of this sort of thing, where the bucks have gone. I have never seen that in all my years here in terms of estimates and that kind of thing.

Mr Trbovich: We can provide that information to you on a board-by-board basis, but beyond that we have no information on where that money is spent. I think that is one of the things that we are most concerned about, because we know that there are some very, very good programs in the area of nutrition being provided to all children attending certain schools and to the provision of support staff to assist the teacher and the principal, particularly in the elementary facility, in dealing with social service agencies, whether it be the police, children's aid and so on.

There is no question that these needs are very important to help the teacher in the classroom. That is why the funding is provided. But it has been there for some time now and we feel strongly that there should be some accounting for how it is spent and maybe some help and encouragement on areas where it should be spent. To build on that, our ministry, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services will be funding some pilot project studies, using school boards in particular. We are here talking about children at risk in the age group zero to eight. So our primary focus would be on the age group three and a half to eight and to examine ways in which we can address some of these emerging problems and help children. So this area is of particular concern to us.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is there much around in terms of studies that have been done? I only know, for instance, of the inner-city school studies in the city of Toronto, which were done quite some time ago, the one during the 1970s and the one in 1981-82, I think it was. Are there many others that were done in terms of the various boards looking at those programs?

Mr Trbovich: I would like to have Dr Paula Warwick of the Ministry of Education contact you and provide you with a briefing of the literature in this area and some of the things that are going on, if that meets with your approval.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Good.

The Acting Chairman: What position do you see yourself in now, Mr Trbovich?

Mr Trbovich: Sorry?

The Acting Chairman: Where are we now? You have sort of gone over what you did with the partners and what you are going to do with the partners. Where would you like to go from here?

Mr Furlong: Madam Chair, can I—

The Acting Chairman: Yes, Mr Furlong. Now those lights are on I know your hand is going to be up all afternoon.

Mr Furlong: I have just a couple of things having to do with assessment. For example, in the Roman Catholic separate school boards, they are having problems identifying supporters and there was some suggestion and recommendations from several presenters that the land transfer tax affidavit be amended. Has that been considered or are there reasons why it is not in place?

Mr Trbovich: It is actively being considered at this time by the Minister of Revenue. His ministry is responsible for the land transfer tax

and it is looking at the land transfer tax affidavit to amend it so that at the time of the purchase of the property, the owners would indicate their school support. I think that is being reviewed by the government and it should be responded to shortly. So that is under review.

The enumeration process is one that is of course supported by the assessor and the local regional assessment commissioner everywhere across Ontario. The exercise of enumerating individuals to give Roman Catholics the opportunity to indicate their school support has been improved in the last five years. For example, when a person moves into a new home, in a new subdivision, the assessor contacts them and they are given an opportunity, right then and there, to indicate their preference with respect to school support if they are Roman Catholic and that takes effect for the following year. That process is put into the system and will be reflected on next year's assessment roll.

So there is every attempt to pick up that assessment, but, as you know, assessment school support cannot change during the year; it can only change on an annual basis. So the land transfer tax affidavit would just help document those changes earlier on in the process, but the event is an annual one. So I see it as a minor improvement if it is put in place, but an improvement none the less.

The Acting Chairman: Mr Trbovich, where do you want to go from here?

Mr Trbovich: I understood that the committee wanted to talk about assessment sharing and pooling. If you want me to talk about that or answer any questions, I would be glad to.

The Acting Chairman: We have not yet got to any of the documents that you have passed to us today, I do not think.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have, yes.

The Acting Chairman: Oh, we likely have gone across some of the matters. Is that where you want to go then, gentlemen, to the assessment area? Have you got questions on that? Do you want to introduce us to the direction you are taking there?

Mr Trbovich: Sure. As I said earlier, the legislation will be introduced early in the new session this fall and the provision will include that it take effect 1 January 1990, provided it receives royal assent.

It is pretty straightforward legislation. It focuses on a number of key areas of change. First of all, it identifies, through means of definition, what is a publicly traded corporation, whose

assessment would be subject to sharing. In other words, the provision for publicly traded corporations to designate would be removed and they would be identified and then their assessment would be shared on the basis of the residential/farm assessment shares of each school board in that municipality.

So, in effect, the residential ratepayers in the municipality are determining the shares of that publicly traded corporate assessment in that municipality, as opposed to it being done on a board-wide basis or as opposed to it being done on a per-pupil or enrolment basis.

The Acting Chairman: Has there been a great shift in support with the extension and now this possibility? Have you statistics on that within communities?

Mr Trbovich: In school support?

The Acting Chairman: Yes. Has there been a blip in, I guess, the regular system?

1530

Mr Trbovich: We have not looked at it from that perspective. My sense is no, there has not been any dramatic shift in any one municipality in the residential sector. You know, you have growth in certain municipalities, new subdivisions and so on, and you see changes there from a very static situation. The more rural parts of Carleton, West Carleton and part of the York region and so on have changed, but the demographics have changed. But within, generally speaking, no, it has been fairly static. In any event, the first changes are around the publicly traded corporation, so it will be defined.

Then the other changes involve the business partnerships, whereas previously, unless all the partners were Roman Catholic and they all agreed to direct their school support to the separate school system, none of it could be, and all of it went to the public system. To make it fair, the rules now are that the partnership can allocate its school support in direct relation to the number of partners who happen to be Catholic and who wish to direct it that way.

With private corporations, the same rules apply and there is no change there.

In the case of telephone and telegraph receipts, which are made up of the household telephone bills and all of the telephone bills of industry and so on, most of that money is going to the public system. Some of it is shared with the municipalities and the regions and counties, but it all goes to the public system and none of it now goes to the separate school system. So that will be shared under the bill on the basis of the residential farm

relative's assessment shares in the municipality, because the money is offered up by a municipality.

Those are the two major changes, the third being that it is going to be shared on the basis of residential assessment. Then it is going to be phased in. This is a fairly complicated exercise. It begins 1 January 1990, and we will make a determination of the amount of assessment that is to be shared. We know the amount that is currently with each board on the basis of school support and we know the amount that is identified for sharing. We will determine the ratio of residential farm assessment that each board has from the previous year and that will be built into the legislation.

It will always be based on the previous year's shares. We will take one sixth of that and allow it to be shown on the assessment roll, so that publicly traded assessment is going to shift one sixth of the way. We are going to do that by municipality. Through the regulations, we are going to publish for each municipality the sharing ratios, the mix and the amount of assessment shifting one sixth of the way. The next year we are going through the same exercise, determine how much of it is there and then go one fifth of the way, if you will, and then similarly in the third year, go one quarter and so on until we have fully phased it in.

At the same time, we are going to improve the category-1 funding of the general legislative grant, the grant in respect of the ceilings. We are projecting to introduce \$30 million a year each year over those six years in an incremental fashion to help offset the overall loss in assessment that the public system would have as a result of this change so that it would be compensated. It is our projection that the \$30 million a year each year going into the base will compensate, on average, the public system. However, there will be some school boards that will still be in a net loss and the commitment is that they will be compensated for any loss arising as a result of this exercise.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is your new estimate on that?

Mr Trbovich: We do not have a new estimate on this at all. We did a projection based on 1987 assessment data and 1988 school board expenditure, which were the only data available at the time. We came up with estimates and we published that information. We will only know the true picture of the shifts on a board-by-board basis and the impact across Ontario when we receive the assessment roll data, which of course

will be a matter of public record. Then we will be able to make a specific determination on those shifts and the need for compensation.

Mr Villeneuve: Regarding the net loss, would that be on a per-pupil basis or based on previous assessment? I notice several yardsticks being used by the different people who make presentations. They talk about per-pupil spending. It seems to be elusive.

Mr Trbovich: It will be a point in time, of course. Let's put it this way—it is going to be based on expenditure patterns this year on an assessment base, and that tax loss. If that assessment had flowed, had remained with the public system and had not moved over to the separate system, what would be the tax consequence of that? Do not forget, we are also pumping in \$30 million extra into the grant ceilings. So the separate school system's rate of support or grant is going to drop proportionally in the coterminous public because it becomes "assessment poor." It is going to increase in grant. But the net compensation is what we are going to be measuring; the net impact on its ability to spend is what we are going to be measuring, predicated on this year's experience.

You can imagine that if we were to commit into future expenditures of a board, if we were to guarantee into the future the expenditures of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board—the wealthiest board in all of Ontario—if we were going to commit provincial funds to its over-ceiling expenditures for ever into the future, that would be ludicrous in my view.

But there are boards out there—and it is not the Metro school board, I might add—that would expect us to meet that commitment. I do not think that is what we mean. We are saying that at this point in time, we are introducing new and fair sharing rules. Because there would be an impact on the public system and there would be a shift, we want to protect that. So we are going to take this point in time and we are going to compensate boards for that loss. As that loss gets phased out over that six-year period, it will get compensated.

Even after the normal compensation through the grant ceilings, there will still be some boards that will remain in a position. We are talking about compensation to the Metro school board, the richest board in all of Ontario, as well.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The thing that this whole move does not deal with is the issue of categorical equity, which somebody raised with us the other day. That is that students across the province are still not covered equally in terms of

the resources that are available to them. For those of us who are interested in looking at some other options in terms of commercial and industrial wealth and how it might be distributed, the one option of course is province-wide pooling. Another would be to look for a means of getting corporate dollars other than through assessment.

If one did that, one of the flaws in so doing that has been pointed out to us by a member of the Macdonald commission would be that nonresident owners would be missed. If you tried to go to a wealth tax on the corporations or an income tax on corporations, you would end up missing a lot of offshore types who have property for speculative reasons or whatever. In the process of moving to this form of pooling that the government has opted for, did anybody get a legal opinion on the constitutionality of having assessments apply only to nonresidents, for instance, and moving to another form for our domestic commercial and industrial types? Were those kinds of possibilities surveyed, like this option for localized pooling which does not deal with that categorical equity matter that has been raised? Have you looked at that kind of survey?

Mr Trbovich: Not specifically with respect to nonresidents, but of course we looked at the constitutionality of moving to a fairer redistribution of property tax, whether it be on a coterminous region-wide basis or a province-wide basis. In both cases, we had positive results. Any move towards equity and fairness is viewed as consistent with the thrust of the British North America Act.

I was just going to comment that when you move off the property tax, it is not just the nonresident or certain other segments of the society that are going to benefit; in effect, you are creating an opportunity for wealth to escape taxation by removing the education burden. There would be a vacuum. There would be a significant drop in the tax burden. Real property as a tax is an *ad valorem* tax, a tax on wealth. As soon as you move off it, you create an opportunity for wealth to move to less taxation, so I guess we have to look at a larger context.

1540

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes. *Ad valorem* is a very blunt instrument, one would have to say. I do not disagree with that, but I also think that the problem that was raised with us early on—I have not actually talked about it much lately—is the cottage owner phenomenon in terms of that nonresident factor, if you want to put it that way.

It is something that is of substantial difficulty for a lot of people who because of our social

traditions have cottages even though that may not reflect an enormous amount of wealth at all, especially fluid wealth at this time in our society. That is another reason for moving away from it.

Mr Trbovich: I should not really comment on this, but I think I will. If you accept that the property tax is there to support community needs, including education which is probably one of the most primary ones, it seems to me that any real property should support that need and anybody fortunate enough to own two or more homes in Ontario should be pleased to present his cheque with respect to his property tax.

The other comment with respect to cottagers and recreational property users is that it is very difficult to define that group. You can say that they are seasonably occupying property; it is usually on a lake. I think of Toronto Harbourfront and the condominium that is occupied for four months of the year. That would fall into the use of recreational property, and it goes on and on. I think you have really serious definitional problems about exempting a group of people fortunate enough to own extra property.

The other point about the property tax is that it is a blunt instrument, but it can be made more progressive and we have already got two measures in place in Ontario. One is the Ontario tax credit which is income-sensitive and sensitive to property tax burdens. It is a question of how much—

Mr R. F. Johnston: How sensitive?

Mr Trbovich: Yes. That is another question. And we have the Ontario property tax grant for seniors which was increased in 1985 from \$500 to \$600 a year.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was \$100 over an eight-year period.

Mr Trbovich: Yes. Those are two circuit-breakers and they are two of the kinds of measures you can introduce in a property tax system to make it less regressive with respect to low-income earners, people on fixed income or that sort of thing.

Mr Jackson: This could be a great debate, but why is there inconsistency within the ministry's arguments with respect to the use of cottage assessment for the purposes of calculating trustee representation for parts of the province? Also, with regard to the rights of an individual who pays taxes, I look at a grandparent who might live in Muskoka for seven months of the year and somewhere else for the balance of the year, but a family member, because of a strike or whatever, cannot get his or her child into that jurisdiction.

These are two examples that immediately fly to my mind of impediments for a property taxpayer, which are inconsistent. I know that is not the purpose of the debate, but you raised it.

While we are on the subject of the seniors' property grant, both Mr Johnston and I requested information on that. I have got some feedback that your office was unable to get the information.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have to go to the Ministry of Revenue for that.

Mr Trbovich: Yes, go to Revenue or the Treasury.

Mr Jackson: Revenue apparently originally indicated it did not have anything, but it is really not that difficult a series of factors to get hold of.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will have it for you.

Mr Trbovich: I have a comment on that point. As you know, the assessor enumerates property and one of the important requirements for electoral purposes is to ask occupants whether they are resident in the municipality. That seems to me to be a pretty straightforward exercise. In the case of your grandmother, she would make that determination. There is also a legal aspect to it, but clearly seven months' residency in a municipality would entitle her to the right to vote.

Mr Jackson: MPPs: We reside in two communities if we live outside of Toronto.

Mr Trbovich: You cannot be resident in two communities in Ontario.

Mr Jackson: MPPs are doing a pretty good job of it.

Mr Trbovich: It is something to do with the way our democracy works, and I cannot comment on that, but that is the rule in Ontario. Maybe you could do it elsewhere. I think it is an important principle.

The other is that this is totally different from the right to attend. I think the point you make is a valid one. I cannot really comment on that.

Mr Jackson: I did not want an opinion. We do not need to dwell on it.

Mr Trbovich: I would want to acknowledge it.

Mr Jackson: As a matter of fact, I have another supplementary. If you have a whole series of questions—

The Acting Chairman: I do not want to give you the opportunity to have a question, but if you want to ask a supplementary—

Mr Jackson: My question has to do with the earlier points you were making about compensat-

ing those boards for the adjustment in industrial-commercial assessment in accordance with the formula you have set out. I also want to suggest that the notion of the land transfer tax form and the adjustments to the residential and farm assessment, which is a fundamental part of the formula, will itself have a material adjustment as a result of the legislation dealing with that point. Separate school enumerators will not automatically revert to public at the point of sale. There may be an opportunity for the separate board to improve its position relative to residential and farm assessments using this new method.

Mr Trbovich: This new vehicle.

Mr Jackson: First of all, do you agree that this accrues as a benefit to the separate boards since they are the ones who are asking for it and the public board is saying it is probably unnecessary?

Mr Trbovich: It just does not work that way. Right now, without the adjustment or the amendment to the land transfer tax affidavit, the assessor is obligated to contact every new—for every sale of every home they send out a municipal enumeration notice amend form to pick up the data. Those data include all the statistics on the household, including school support. That happens now or is supposed to be happening now.

With the introduction of putting that on the LTT affidavit, in effect you are getting that information probably two and three months earlier, because the registration of the sale of the property occurs quickly and then the people move subsequently into the household. It is just a question of bringing it in on a more timely basis.

Mr Jackson: In the worst case it could be a year and in the least case it could be within a month.

Mr Trbovich: I think it would likely improve the information by about three months.

Mr Jackson: How could you make that statement?

Mr Trbovich: I was an assessor for 17 years. I was intimately involved in assessment matters.

Mr Jackson: That occurs at what point in the year?

Mr Trbovich: The pickup of the data occurs throughout the year, but the only window of opportunity to change the assessments of school support occurs between the time the notices are issued, usually the third week in November each year, to the close of the roll. The second Tuesday in December is the return of the assessment roll and 21 days after that it closes off and that is the last day on which you can file an appeal. You can

amend it manually with a simple declaration to the commissioner in that period, that whole year prior to the return of the roll, and then you have to go through a formal appeal process. You only have 21 days after the return of the roll and then you cannot touch that roll for a year. In the meantime, you have all the year to get it ready for next year, if you follow what I am saying. Do you follow?

Mr Jackson: Yes.

Mr Trbovich: This introduction of the land transfer tax change really is just going to speed up the flow of that information to the assessor and is going to put the pressure on the solicitor who is processing those forms to collect that information. That is where the real help is.

Mr Jackson: The financial implications are that if a home is transferred in ownership and it is currently listed as public, it will stay public until it is picked up on the next assessment.

Mr Trbovich: That will not change. That cannot change because you cannot change school boards—

Mr Jackson: There is no financial adjustment. It is just a process of serving notice.

Mr Trbovich: That is right. You cannot change school support in-year. You cannot. It is an annual process.

You can notify of the change. If I am a separate school supporter and I suddenly move in and I am in a household that is public, I cannot change that until the next roll, because it is a tax roll. It is the tax roll that is predicated on the assessment roll in the year previous. That is the way the rules work. I see that as a big help, frankly, to assessors, to get that information more quickly, but other than that it does not have that—

The Acting Chairman: There is no attempt to change that.

Mr Trbovich: No.

1550

Mr Jackson: There are no financial implications other than, I think, one brief made reference to the fact that even with the mailed-in assessment notice it is sometimes lost. We had one individual who was—I know it was not a trustee, but it was someone who was on an advisory committee who realized he was still paying public school taxes. It would not be a trustee because—

Mr Trbovich: It could be a trustee not paying his taxes.

Mr Jackson: —they could not be elected if they were not paying the assessment. I will leave

it at that. I am pleased you gave me that fuller understanding. I thought there was some financial advantage to that.

Mr Trbovich: Just to comment, I think there is going to be a lot of interest on the part of the school systems in ensuring, in the case of the separate system, that Catholics are aware of their choices. After all, all others do not have a choice in this matter, so the focus is going to be on those ratepayers. That is up to the boards.

Mr Jackson: Just to finish that off, then really the only concern that may be raised is that the calculation of what constitutes assessment—do not grin. I get nervous when you start grinning. The calculation may not be based on actuals but may be based on what at any one time is registered in accordance with the computers at the assessment office. In new subdivisions this would be critical because that formula would be applied to the whole subdivision. It would be the builder who would be paying those taxes. It would be held at the lower rate. If they had all those sales recorded and were in the process of transferring and there is a high incidence of Catholics, then you might pick that figure, not the actual, but that which is recorded at any one time. There might be a material difference there.

Mr Trbovich: Again, we are looking at the sharing ratios established in the year previous, which is a fixed, verifiable issue, so it is always going to lag one year behind.

The Acting Chairman: Are there any further questions at this point on anything Mr Trbovich has said? Mr Trbovich, what would you like to do? You have been on what I would suggest is a hot seat for a little over an hour and a half. I would suggest that we—

Mr R. F. Johnston: We learned all about his sordid background and everything.

Mr Trbovich: Yes, 17 years in assessing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: An assessor for 17 years; my God.

The Acting Chairman: We could perhaps go until 4:15 today. I do not know what the other information is that you would like to present to us or how much farther the committee would like to go into what you distributed.

Mr Trbovich: We are here to answer questions and we really do not have any formal presentation to make. If you want us to stay and answer, we will be more than happy to, or perhaps you want us to come back at some point in time. I know Leon Brumer is prepared to answer any questions you might have of a technical nature and that sort of thing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Why do we not have Leon tomorrow morning, if necessary.

The Acting Chairman: Gentlemen, do you feel you have had enough opportunity to look at these handouts today? Do you have any follow-up questions from any of them, or would you like to take a recess until four o'clock to look at them and then give 15 minutes more to asking any questions that arise? I am at your direction.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I asked one question that came from the new documents. I have nothing further myself.

Mr Keyes: I have read through the documents. I think they were fairly straightforward. There were the questions from members of the committee. I think the answers are there. I am going to read more of the minister's statement on general legislative grants again to better understand them. I think they have given a fairly good explanation of the factors that go into the GLGs in that area. The other one was on sharing, which we just asked for a minute ago and it seems to be—

The Acting Chairman: Is there any other information that after today's discussion you would like Mr Trbovich to provide to us? Does anybody have any further questions?

Mr Jackson: I have a small one that I have held because it is somewhat related but it has to do with—yesterday the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations made a presentation to us with respect to new programs provincially mandated and somehow monitoring and measuring their impact on local school board budgets. The resolution specifically dealt with destreaming.

I have requested this information, which was the degree to which public participation was encouraged by your ministry with the destreaming initiative. In a remote sort of way, it has to do with the accountability point of an initiative which is being mandated by the province and the fact that the boards themselves are not 100 per cent sure as to whether or not the necessary funding will be there. The home and school associations had specifically requested that, in these kinds of areas, there be public participation.

I know this committee has reported at length in terms of the importance of research and public participation. Perhaps you could just let me know, with a copy of the memo to school boards, which memorandum that was and whether there was a public participation component or not. We are hearing of boards that have one or two parents

on to deal with the implementation and a lot of boards that do not. If you could help me with that, I would appreciate it.

Mr Trbovich: We will bring that back as soon as I get an answer. I do not have it. Does anybody? No.

Mr Keyes: I have a couple of questions that are just minor technical ones; that is, we had the presentation put to us about a request for funding for transportation for the gifted classes. Could you just express—I do not think I picked it up from anything you have said this afternoon—the role that we have for special education? We know that the gifted are identified through the IPRCs, the same as those with other needs, but I am not sure about the funding. Do you want to comment on that one, and at the same time perhaps for the French-language schools, but mainly gifted?

Mr Trbovich: Correct me if I am wrong, panel, but my understanding is that the current funding mechanism, the approval process, does not fund the transportation of gifted children to enrichment or special programs. In the case of the Halton board, where children are congregated in a school and the board chooses to do it this way and it offers one day a week enrichment, or full-time enrichment at that school, they may transport those children.

Other boards may choose to deal with gifted enrichment programs in a different way in the school. They would deal with the children in the school and provide enrichment programming in that school and not necessarily congregate the pupils. Therefore, they have no need for that extra cost of transportation.

Our current policy is that we do not fund the transportation of children to enrichment programs. Other funding for exceptional children is in the approval process. Since we are looking at the whole question of transportation review, that certainly is going to be on the table. I guess what we are saying is, on the one hand, why should we fund and support a board that tends to congregate? I mean, are we making a decision to encourage them to congregate?

On the other hand, we fund so many things, and I am going to be frank with you, that maybe we ought to fund that one too, if we are not going to change the current mechanism.

The Acting Chairman: You realize that is now in Hansard.

Mr Trbovich: I know, but it is true. If we do not change the current mechanism, we might as well fund it as well.

Mr Keyes: I have one more question about the funding towards continuing education. That has been raised by a great number of boards. There has been a great cutback in a sense, so I am asking for the philosophy within the ministry on the funding of continuing education.

Mr Trbovich: The cost of continuing education funding on the part of the ministry has increased dramatically. It is not surprising, I guess, to many of us. Particularly in the large urban areas, we see very substantial programs being advertised in the media to encourage adults to come back to school for OSIS credits, on the one hand, which is what we help support financially and, on the other hand, general interest courses. This has grown.

The continuing education funding mechanism has been put in place and is a temporary funding measure, and it was always understood by the education community that it was going to be changed. Frankly, we have been two years late in changing it, and now we are—

The Acting Chairman: Another good quote in Hansard.

Mr Trbovich: Well, we have been. We are now in the process of alerting the community to that change and giving people the opportunity to comment on it. There are a number of options and they tend to address those issues and to distinguish continuing education for credit from adult basic education, which is different and requires a different kind of funding approach. Of course, we are not funding or supporting education for interest, only for credit.

1600

Mr Ruprecht: Just a brief question for clarification: On page 3 of your presentation, you have got one category about funding for trainable retarded pupils. Does "retarded pupils" mean in a broad category? Are you brushing everybody with a broad category of saying autistic children or those who are not obviously retarded but may be falling into different categories? Are you using this term as including everyone, including autistic or other programs?

Mr Trbovich: No. These children are identified by the boards themselves through a process, this IPRC process. They are making the determination that these children are trainable retarded. What that makeup is and what kind of children are in there I cannot comment on, but it is interesting to note that our previous funding formula encouraged boards to identify, through that IPRC process, children as trainable retarded, because they got a lot of funding for that purpose.

You see in this particular example that the provincial average of trainable retarded children per 1,000 of average daily enrolment in this particular area is 3.78, but in this board's case it has 9.92. Are we saying that there are a lot of trainable retarded children in this geographic location of Ontario? I do not think so. I think it is a function of the identification process. It is a concern that boards, because they got more money, tended to identify these children in that category.

Mr Ruprecht: Are there other categories that we are funding than this sort of identifiable problem?

Mr Trbovich: No, just this area. We have identified trainable retarded children and we have funded them in a special way. It is almost \$5,000 per pupil.

Mr Ruprecht: Correct me if I am wrong. Each school board makes its own determination in terms of what categories these pupils fall into, whether they are exceptional or whether they are retarded, and we pay extra money.

Mr Trbovich: Previously, if they determined them to be TR children, they would get almost \$5,000 per child.

Mr Burtnyk: More than—

Mr Trbovich: More than an ordinary child.

The funding system was encouraging boards to identify these children. It has implications for segregation versus integration and all that. So we changed the funding formula in 1989, this year. We said: "We're no longer interested in your identifying children. They're not going to be identified that way, and we are going to phase in the change."

Mr Ruprecht: Then what? What is the change?

Mr Trbovich: The change is that it is going to go into special education funding and we increase the funding by an extra \$10 million in Ontario so it works out to \$9.92 extra per student, per every child in the system. In that way, we are actually putting in more than we did before but we are not asking boards any longer to identify TR children.

Mr Ruprecht: This brings me to my final question, and I think it is the important one. What you have done, essentially, is to say to the school boards, "We want you to lower your expectations in terms of our treating or helping or teaching these children." What you in fact are saying, from what I understand here, to the school boards is, "Don't give us any more kids because the funding formula has changed from

\$40 to \$10." That is what you are telling me, right? That means that the service the school has been providing is going to be lower, so that the expectations in regard to the children who have been identified as trainable retarded will be lower?

Mr Trbovich: No. We are being very straightforward in this regard. We are saying that we are no longer interested in your identifying trainable retarded children for the purposes of funding. We are just going to provide grants across Ontario on the basis of every child in Ontario.

The Acting Chairman: Was there not one condition on that, that to get that funding they had to be in segregated settings?

Mr Trbovich: Yes. You had to put these trainable retarded children in a special class and identify them.

The Acting Chairman: That was the difficulty with this, that in any other way of dealing or educating with these children, you could not claim the funding.

Mr Trbovich: That is right.

The Acting Chairman: And that was suggesting you are directing the way in which these children should be educated simply by the manner in which they were funded.

Mr Trbovich: The funding system was encouraging segregation, if you will. The funding system should be neutral at minimum, and that is the change that occurred. In point of fact, if you accept that the provincial average of incidence of trainable retarded children across Ontario is roughly 3.78 per 1,000, is it not surprising that some boards are almost up to 10 or eight or even higher. What they have been doing in effect, through their IPRC process, is identifying these children. I do not think that there are more trainable retarded children in any one specific location in Ontario, not to this extent.

Mr Jackson: We have heard evidence to that account.

Mr Trbovich: For the population, we are talking about what here? Three times greater incidence? Four?

Mr Jackson: Yes, based on community-based programming. If you know that group, I have been involved with them for 17 years and I can tell you that there are areas in this province where outstanding programs are available whether they are institution- or community-based. Therefore, families will locate for school boards, especially

on the integration model where families have moved in order to get those services they have not been able to get elsewhere. But I just thought I would caution you for making that kind of a generalized statement that these kids may not move and the families may not move as a result of their kids' needs.

Mr Trbovich: Just a comment on that. If the child is from out of the board, the board charges full fees for the child.

Mr Jackson: No, I did not say that.

Mr Trbovich: No, if the child—

Mr Jackson: If the families moved to those areas.

Mr Trbovich: But if the families move to the areas for those special programs, then they become resident internal. You are right.

Mr Jackson: Right, which would skew the numbers, and we have had actual presentations from groups on trainably mentally handicapped, TMH that have said, "We have located in that area," then there is a large incidence of them. There is a report on our desk right now that was just tabled. It talks about the Hastings and the Frontenac boards. Both can make cogent arguments, unless our researchers are seeing something differently, that indicate that grant actually works against them.

Mr Trbovich: In this case, the grant would work against them, the change would work against them. There is no question of that. That is the information we have provided you which shows the drop in the grant.

Mr Ruprecht: I appreciate your comments very much. You see, if you are a principal now, what decision would you make if you have 40 to 50 children in a school that had been previously identified as trainable retarded? Now you are changing the funding formula to make it more equitable as far as you are concerned, but now it is up to the principal to decide how he is going to spend those funds because you have taken the category out and you are saying you are making it more equal. But now the funding pressures will come from the all areas of the school board and those who were identified as retarded previously will consequently be paid less attention with this funding. I think that is my concern.

Mr Trbovich: It is not the principal's call, as I understand it; it is that these children have been identified through an IPRC process. That is a board decision. They have been identified as being exceptional in this case and requiring specific programming. Presumably they will reassess all of this and if they choose to continue

to congregate the kids in the classroom, they are going to get less provincial grant but if they choose to continue it, it is going to fall on their local taxpayers to support that segregation model, if you will.

The Acting Chairman: I do think Mr Trbovich started to say that we have had certainly a move towards integration. Many boards have come before us and said that and some boards have actually come and said it cost less to integrate, which is of course what you are hoping may happen. Certainly the final jury has not come back on this one.

Are there any further comments from the ministry officials on this? Does Wayne want to say something or do you want to say something?

Mr Burtnyk: The only comment I was going to make is that the board still has to go through the IPRC and still identify the pupils for program purposes as the TR pupils and to serve those students.

Mr Ruprecht: I am just hoping, as you say, Madam Chairman, that through this change of the funding mechanism, we are not going to be hurting people that we do not wish to hurt. As you say, the results have not come in yet. I am just hoping that we are doing the right thing.

1610

Mr Furlong: I have a question on capital. This morning we heard from the North York Board of Education, which indicated it had a deal in the works with a developer whereby it was going to be selling some density and was going to be able to recapture from the sale of that density enough money to renovate four or five other schools within its system.

It strikes me that the one-floor school may be a thing of the past. During our last set of hearings we had an architect here proposing something to the effect that you had a school on the ground floor, and then perhaps specialized retail or commercial space or something on a second floor and even on top of that maybe four or five floors of affordable housing for seniors and the seniors could then be used as volunteers in the schools.

Are those models discussed by the ministry or do boards have the authority or the right, and would they have the ministry's support to conduct something like this?

Mr Trbovich: We are very much aware of the models and we actually have some examples of them in Ontario. For example, the Metropolitan Separate School Board redeveloped a site. It is a facility just north of Highway 401 and off Yonge Street; I think it is called Spring Garden Avenue,

if I am correct. You have a development there that is partly commercial, partly high-rise and you have a school in a vertical mode. It has worked out very well and there is a lot of income from that project. The school was built and totally financed out of the redevelopment. It was of tremendous benefit to the Metro separate school board and its ratepayers.

You are going to see some examples of that in downtown Toronto with the Toronto Board of Education and the Metro separate board. As redevelopment occurs, we will be looking at those models, shared high-rise models; there is already one in place.

In North York, there are opportunities for boards to look at existing facilities, if they are in need of renovation or retrofit, to redevelop them and use the example of affordable housing or senior citizens' housing in a high-rise mode with the school facility on the first or second floor and also some community centre components. The site is conducive to that because you would get more acreage, in effect, for some parking and also for playing because those sites are quite large as they are. In putting a high-rise on it, it becomes even more interesting.

The Acting Chairman: The shared high-rise model you are thinking of is a public-separate, the one down in the market?

Mr Trbovich: Yes, that is the one. It works very well. I think we are going to see more of this in the urban areas that are undergoing redevelopment. Our attitude is to encourage it.

The thing we would like to see is that where we have air rights or density, these be leased rather than sold outright so that the income stream is maintained in the education community and it is something there for the future. When you look at redevelopment there are different models. The few that have been attempted so far have been very successful.

Mr Jackson: I wish we had more time to go into the need to review Bill 82 and the success of IPRCs because Mr Ruprecht raised some good points. I for one have concerns about your point that school boards will make those decisions in terms of identification, that IPRCs are actually working, when in fact we have had documented cases by the advocates of children in need saying to withdraw from the IPRC process because it has really fallen into disrepute.

I had a case in my own riding where a parent, upon entering a room, had a stopwatch started and was told, "You've got 10 minutes to make a case." When she asked if she could see the documentation on her daughter she was told,

"That's confidential material." When we investigated, we found this was the norm for my school board and not the exception.

There is much the ministry could be saying about boards, when you change the formula the way you have, to put those kinds of natural pressures on school boards, that there may be some repercussions for how the IPRC process works—pressures on boards, where to fall on which side of the line when dealing with a child's needs. I for one see it as getting more complicated than less.

My question has to do with the letter of the then Minister of Education, the member for Wentworth North (Mr Ward), which you tabled with us today. On page 8, a matter I considered of serious consequence to boards—you have addressed this—under "Other information," the very last item is, "The calculation of the grant in respect of changes in tax revenue has been adjusted in 1989 to more accurately reflect the approved portion of the total mill rate."

If I understand that paragraph correctly, that is an adjustment that was made very early in 1989 which caused considerable revenue losses in terms of grant calculations for several boards in this province. In particular, the Sudbury Board of Education notified me of some shortfalls of nearly \$1 million on its base budget with those adjustments.

Could you explain more fully what was meant by that item. If it is the change in the formula, not some adjustment that was done in the formula early this year, there are several boards which indicated to us that they were adversely affected by that adjustment.

Mr Burtnyk: I do not really know all the details of the changes in that formula, so I think it would be better if we got back to you on that. It would have to do with the calculation of approved cost, but I do not really know the details.

Mr Jackson: I received correspondence from about five boards. I just wondered about the extent to which you were able to measure the impact on those boards. It was a ministry directive adjusting the formula for a mill rate calculation and it adversely affected several boards in this province. If it does not spring to mind, I will be pleased to send over at least the documentation I have and the correspondence from the ministry with the Sudbury board case. I know Hamilton was caught; I met with them. The numbers do not spring to mind, but the larger the board, obviously the larger the amount and there was considerable concern expressed.

Mr Trbovich: We would be interested in receiving that information. We will look into it.

Mr Jackson: What was meant by that paragraph then? If it is a confusion to you about what I am raising, it should not be a confusion to you what statement is made in the minister's memo. What is actually being addressed here?

Mr Trbovich: You have to adjust for revenue to a school board. We are trying to measure relative wealth and we are giving out grants on that basis, so we are getting a picture of the relative wealth as expressed in the assessment tax base of the board. If you are getting in income like supplementary grants and that sort of thing, and we are trying to calculate its impact on your revenues, it is always adjusted the year after the fact and that is how the process works. If you suddenly became wealthy in-year—you know, the SkyDome appeared in your municipality—then we would have to adjust for that. We would always do it the year after. The change, as I understand it, occurred on what we considered to be the approved expenditure. I hope I am getting this right. I cannot remember the exact details, but it was minor. We are surprised to hear that Sudbury and Hamilton and a couple of other boards were in for a—there may be something else.

Mr Jackson: It was a formula adjustment and the one-year lag sounds familiar, but I know exactly where the memo is on Sudbury. I will get it over to you.

Mr Trbovich: Okay; we will look at it.

Mr Jackson: As I say, I raised it in a couple of correspondences with the minister and I would like you to better explain that to this committee.

Mr Trbovich: Yes, we will.

The Acting Chairman: Are there any further questions of the three gentlemen who have not been with us day in and day out?

I would like to thank the three of you. I would like also to say to Mr Trbovich that Mr Lenglet came on very sudden notice one afternoon and now I would like to record that we appreciated that. He brought us up to date as quickly as possible, with Mr Brumer's direction, on what we needed on that particular afternoon. Although he did not say anything today, he did a very good job when you were not here.

Mr Brumer, you have some things that are quite aside from what has been said this afternoon that you want to bring to us, or parts of the reports. Is that correct? Am I misreading that?

Mr Brumer: No, it is fine.

The Acting Chairman: You have nothing more you want to bring to the committee's attention then.

Mr Brumer: No.

The Acting Chairman: Then, unless you want to, I guess we will not ask you to come back tomorrow. We are just going to meet tomorrow morning to scan and go over with our researcher some of the ideas we want to pursue.

We now are going to have a motion by the committee. As you know, we had a discussion earlier in the day. Having sat here and received many messages, as far as I can understand it, the House leaders have agreed that we will not begin formal writing immediately due to a couple of us having a great deal of difficulty being here the next couple of days. I would ask that we have a motion.

Mr Furlong moves that the clerk be directed to write to the three House leaders requesting that the committee be authorized to meet on Monday 16 October and Monday 30 October to write the committee's report.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Chairman: This is a formality. It has been passed. That will be the way in which the committee will direct itself to the writing of the report. This will give us more time as individuals to read that which has been presented and certainly to pull our own thoughts together.

Thank you very much for the way in which we have proceeded through very difficult material this afternoon. Our researcher, Bob, would like to have a couple of words with us.

Dr Gardner: There are three things we have already put before committee members: information on teacher training in other provinces; a collection of various documents the committee has asked for at different times; some calculations and an enclosed memo from the Frontenac County Board of Education and the Hastings County Board of Education.

Tannis Manikel is about to distribute the draft report we have worked up over the last couple of days. Again, if I can just emphasize this to members, this is really in many ways still a framework for committee members' discussion. We have tried to flesh it out concretely as much as we could, but of course it is still for members to decide what their direction is, what recommendations there will be and so on. It is very early days, but again it is much easier for you to do that from something quite concrete.

The Acting Chairman: If I may, for the record's sake, I would like to thank Mr Brumer for being with us. I am sorry, Linda; like Brian's name, I cannot remember your surname—Perry. It has been very helpful to have constant and I should say very concentrated, focused support of this committee's work on what is certainly a very difficult subject. We have had forthright answers on every occasion and I would suggest quite a bit of speed with the answers we have requested. This tome certainly was quite a challenge to each of us who got it. Thank you very much, all of you, for what you have done.

The committee adjourned at 1626.

ERRATUM

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